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A CASE FOR PLAIN SPEAKING

oldly handled, the master-stroke of Nazi ropaganda, which has led to a rupture of relaons between the Soviet Union and the Polish overnment, may yet prove an advantage to the nited Nations and a boomerang for Goebbels. olish-Soviet enmity has long been at work ndermining the alliance between the U.S.S.R. d the Western Democracies; if the public pture produces plain-speaking and some sense realism among the Polish authorities in Britain d America, the turmoil will have been well orth while.

It is important to be honest with the Poles. hey deserve our honesty. The unthinking urage and the appalling suffering of their mmon people, their unhappy history, their mantic temperament and the total lack of litical realism—these are factors which comand sympathy and which compel all who have do with them to utter such exasperated marks as that they are the "Ireland of the ontinent." Persecuted nationalism has the me political effects at both ends of the Continent. t it would be hard to find a parallel for the ly of the Polish suggestion, in response to a erman propagandist story, that the matter ould be investigated by the International Red oss in territory occupied by the Nazis. Goebbels thusiastically accepted the proposal almost as on as it appeared. The Poles put themselves mpletely in the wrong. The Nazi story, unched by Goebbels as part of his campaign European unity against Bolshevism, was full contradictions, and the Polish communique s in many respects vague and unconvincing. ere is no more reason to believe that the ermans suddenly discovered near Smolensk ter eighteen months' occupation) the bodies thousands of Polish officers, with their uniforms d identity cards intact, than there is reason to lieve the similar discoveries by the Germans of bodies of German nationals murdered by the les when they invaded Poland in 1939. This not to say that many Polish officers may not ve been shot or relegated to Siberia by the P.U. The relations of the two countries in 39 were not far short of war, and the Soviet vernment, often with reason, would regard the landed aristocracy and the officer class of Poland in the light of Fascists and class enemies. Large numbers of Poles were deported into Russia in 1939, and since the agreement with Sikorski in 1941, when many thousands of Poles were released and allowed to form themselves into a Polish Army, the Poles have made many inquiries about missing officers and received no satisfaction. Their fate is unknown; certainly no light will be thrown upon it by any Red Cross inquiry. That worthy organisation promptly put an end to discussion by refusing the commission unless the Soviet Government also agreed to it. Sensible Poles must be asking how their Government ever made so crazy a proposal. Why did they not ask the Red Cross to investigate the assassination, reported on terribly convincing evidence, of many hundreds of thousands of civilian Poles by the Nazis?

Honesty with the Poles should go farther than this. If the United Nations lose this war, Poland will cease to exist; the Nazis have made it clear that they intend in the most literal sense the extermination of the Polish people. Those who are permitted to live will do so as slaves. On the other hand, if the United Nations win the war, Poland can live—and live far better than before—on one condition and on one condition only. That condition is that Poland is on terms of friendship with the Soviet Union. No greater wrong can be done to Poles in Britain or the United States than to pretend that they can have in the future any other security. After the last war the most fantastic claims were put forward by the Poles, and because of their influence in the United States and, in particular, with President Wilson, a settlement that could not be stable and which was ultimately fatal to Poland was imposed by the framers of the Versailles Peace. If that settlement was in any sense defensible in 1919 that was because both Germany and Russia were for the time being defeated and helpless, and because the Poles were assured of the full support of the then overwhelmingly powerful French army. The notion of bolstering up the Poles as a permanent barrier against the Soviet Union, on the one side, and as the permanent policeman of Prussia, on the other, was never wise, but, in terms of the power politics of 1919, it was possible as a temporary arrangement. No such settlement is conceivable in the next Treaty. The influence of the Soviet Union must be the chief factor in Eastern Europe; and to imagine, as some Poles apparently do, that they can rely on the United States or Great Britain to guarantee their frontiers or maintain their security, if they are at odds with their far more powerful neighbour, is to move politics into the atmosphere of cloud-cuckoo land. That is understood and freely said in official and informed circles in London and Washington, and the *Times* did a good service, when it spoke plainly on the subject in a leading article before Mr. Eden's visit to Washington. It was a pity that Mr. Eden should have given an interview in the United States which was calculated to encourage the Poles to believe that the British Government did not accept the attitude of the *Times*. Plain-speaking and realistic thinking is the only hope for the Poles. Full collaboration with the Soviet Union, for which Sikorski himself has personally worked, is essential if the United Nations are to win the war, and if misunderstanding and tragedy are to be avoided in the Peace.

We must carry our plain-speaking a stage farther. The principal defect of Soviet policy has always been a doctrinaire assumption that because the class struggle is a reality, nationalism is a dying force. Lenin under-estimated Polish nationalism, admitted his error and adjusted his policy accordingly. Stalin, who made the same mistake in Finland, and who has since drawn so freely on the immense resources of Russian nationalism as well as Soviet revolutionary feeling, showed in his agreement with Sikorski that he was prepared to recognise a reformed Poland as his neighbour. But Sikorski is far more realistic than most of his associates, some of whom express views that are more anti-Soviet than anti-Nazi. Nor has Sikorski been able to prevent the most irresponsible Polish propaganda being published in the Polish press and expressed on the wireless by Poles who speak with the permission of the B.B.C. In the United States, where Poles, as the most influential foreign language group, have very considerable electoral importance, the situation is still worse and, to the Soviet Union, still more unintelligible. The Soviet Government sees the activities of the Poles as part of the same pattern into which the encouragement of Mihailovitch, of Otto of Habsburg and the recognition of Darlan also fall. Some of the difficulties of coping with the great block of Catholic and anti-Soviet votes probably escape Stalin who is not subject, as Mr. Roosevelt is, to the embarrassment of "pressure groups." That the task of curbing Polish propaganda and seeing to it that Poland is represented in the Democracies by leaders with a greater sense of realities is difficult we do not doubt. But still less do we doubt that it is the most urgent issue now confronting Mr. Eden and Secretary Hull.

Von Arnim at Bay

Whatever may have been the reasons—ill-health or recall by the Führer—underlying Rommel's relinquishment of command in Africa, his successor, von Arnim, is proving to be a redoubtable adversary. With mountain *massifs* blocking the western and southern approaches to Tunis from Medjez-el-Bab and Enfidaville, and with broken, marshy ground protecting the vulnerable Tunis plain between Goubellat and Pont du Fahs, the defence has enjoyed great natural advantages. But, even so, the tenacious resistance put up by the enemy during the first ten days of the combined assault by General Alexander's army group has been remarkable. With the sea at their backs and with little prospect either of further reinforcement or successful evacuation, von Arnim's troops have fought, in the words of a *Times* correspondent "without hope, without fear and with deadly efficiency." To deny them this tribute is to belittle the achievements of the British infantry and armoured divisions who have steadily forced their way, foot by foot, through formidable hill positions in face of persistent counter-attacks. At some point the strongly prepared perimeter covering the Axis bridgehead will crack; after that the end may come swiftly. But the effort which is being required to liquidate the enemy's final outpost in Africa should dispel any illusions that the European *Festung* can be easily breached.

India's Easter

Indians spent an eventful Easter. Amid all their dissensions they realised their unity by protesting against the Bill which limits the right of their emigrants to acquire land in South Africa. Then to Lord Linlithgow's slender record of constructive achievement a useful reform was added. The hundreds of dwarf "States" in Western India, many of them no bigger than Hyde Park, are now to be grouped round Baroda, in such a way that their inhabitants can use its schools and hospitals. Unhappily their functionless "princes" (in reality feudal landlords) will continue to draw their unearned incomes in full from the revenues. This innovation goes to prove that the Paramount Power can, when it pleases, impose reform on the "princes" without their consent. Next, the Federal High Court put the Government in the wrong by deciding that the rule under the wartime emergency Act which it had used to justify the arrest of Gandhi and other Congress prisoners was irregular and *ultra vires*: it was, of course, promptly redrafted and the prisoners gained nothing. Meanwhile, in Bengal, after a brief interregnum, the Muslim League, with the participation of some independent Hindus, has managed to form a Ministry. This may in part account for the truculence and high spirits of Mr. Jinnah's address to a conference of the League at Delhi. In effect he has got Pakistan, since Ministries formed by his League now rule all the Muslim provinces, except the N.W. Frontier, with Assam thrown in. Considering that his League won less then one in four of the Muslim seats at the last election, this is an astonishing success, which he owes partly to the Viceroy's patronage and partly to Gandhi's mistakes. For the benefit of the gallery he attacked the British Government with some violence and the Hindus with even greater heat. What he wants from both is an undertaking that they will respect the result of an eventual plebiscite of Muslim voters over Pakistan. Given this, he would be willing to form a National Government. That offer should be explored, though once again a conference of the numerous Momin community, Muslim proletarians, has denounced Pakistan. But with Gandhi no communication is yet possible. Even Mr. Phillips, Mr. Roosevelt's envoy, has had to quit India without seeing him.

Indians in South Africa

The South African Asiatic Bill passed its final reading in the Senate on Tuesday. This is described as a "Pegging Bill"; that is, it prevents the acquisition of land by Indians in Natal and the Transvaal. It will not alter the actual position much; an effective ban on the purchase of residential property by Indians has been exercised for long by the Durban Council. But the bill is a legal segregation, putting Indians on the level of the wronged Bantu, and as such it is bitterly resented by Indians in Africa and India. South Africa, they feel, owes her safety in this war in part, at least, to the extraordinary courage and skill of Indian regiments fighting in Abyssinia and North Africa, and this is a mean and ungrateful return. The Indian Government has protested against such a measure at such a time. Mr. Jinnah spoke against it at the congress of the Muslim League; all the former Agents General of India in South Africa have telegraphed collectively to General Smuts. According to an answer of Mr. Amery in the House on April 22nd, the British Government has done nothing. Yet it is the British Government which might be supposed to have some influence with the British South Africans of Natal, who are the prime movers in this racial policy. The strange factor in this story is General Smuts himself; it is extraordinary that a premier of his humane philosophy and liberal views on racial questions should have met the deputation of Indians, who begged him to make some extra-legal compromise on this question, with a flat negative—or so the Vice-President of the Natal Indian Association reports.

American Wage Problem

The labour situation in the U.S.A. gets more and more in a tangle. The soft coal miners, who back Mr. John Lewis, maintain that they are now free to strike at any moment, in view of the collapse of their renewed negotiations with the owners. But they may decide not to strike; for the Administration is said to be ready to placate them, not with an advance in wage rates, which would violate the "little steel formula," but with a guarantee of a six-day week for fifty-two weeks in the year, which would mean a big increase in earnings without any change of rates and would thus preserve the letter if not the spirit of official policy. Meanwhile, both the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. are protesting strongly against the new restrictions on the right of the Labour Board to correct wage inequalities. The Unions—both groups of them—maintain that they were given a pledge that wages questions would be settled during the war by tripartite arbitration machinery and regard the Administration's directions limiting the Board's discretion as a violation of this pledge. The power to correct wage inequalities, say the Union leaders, must be preserved intact; but in the U.S.A. wage inequalities are so enormous, and often so flagrant, that there will be little left to the "little steel formula" if this claim is conceded in full. Compromise is possible between the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. because neither organisation wishes to push matters to extremes. Mr. Lewis, on the other hand, seems quite ready to "go the limit." Some concession to labour claims the Administration is probably very ready to make, if it can. But supporters of Big Business are howling at it about inflation and the Farm Block in Congress is standing by to take advantage of any new opening.

Planning by Inches

The Town and Country Planning Bill intr duced into Parliament last week is a year and half late. It does no more than barely impleme the promise made more than that time a upon the appearance of the Uthwatt Committe short interim report. Its effort is merely "deem" all land not already covered by planni resolutions to be so covered, without the formal ties necessary to this preliminary stage in planni under the existing Act. Over and above th the Bill confers a few small additional powers o the Minister and on the local planning authoritie but it does not touch any of the major questio raised in the main report of the Uthwatt Com mittee. It leaves still unsettled both the powe to be given to local authorities or other plannin bodies to acquire land in areas which are alread built up and the still more important questio of public acquisition of "development rights in undeveloped areas. Sir William Jowitt, ask in the reconstruction debate last Friday how t Government was getting on with these maj problems, had nothing to say except that the ne Minister of Town and Country Planning woul be considering them and would report on the in due course to the Committee of Ministers ov which he (Sir William Jowitt) presides. In effe nothing has yet been decided, or is apparent within sight of decision; and local authoriti are still quite in the dark about the vital questio of compensation which are bound to affect th plans for rebuilding either within the existi built-up areas or outside. Behind the scene a big battle is going on over the Uthwatt pr posals. The Land Union is fatuously threatenin that industry will "leave the country" if th are adopted, and there is formidable hostili to them in Tory quarters and, unfortunatel little understanding of them among the gener public. What the public does understand is th the Ministry of Town and Country Planning i and will remain even when the new Bill h become law, a mere freak, and that there exis behind it not even the groundwork of an agen for carrying through a considered programme physical reconstruction.

Short Bros.

The opposition to the action of Sir Staffo Cripps in taking over the shares of Short Br has signally collapsed. When even Lord Gedd says that his only criticism of the Ministry Aircraft Production is that it ought to have tak action long ago, the critics are left with nothi further to say. The fact is that the aircr industry, called upon to expand very rapidly fro quite small dimensions to a prodigious size, h been, and still is, going through serious growi pains. A considerable proportion of those w direct its fortunes are not "mass-productio minded." They know how to make good a planes, but not how to make them cheaply or what matters in war—rapidly and at a low r cost in terms of man-hours. They are artists, n Henry Fords; and they resent being asked turn out "Fords" instead of "Rolls-Royces It is, of course, true that the high quality of o airplanes has been a big factor in the success of t R.A.F., and that nothing must be done to low quality in ways that will increase danger or redu fighting efficiency for the key types. But, output increases, the nature of the demand some extent changes; and, if military plans a to go by schedule, speed of construction essential, especially to meet new needs for spec types. Some of the aircraft firms—apparen not a few—have failed to adapt their methods these new needs; and others, in control of large number of widely dispersed factory uni have got into a bad muddle with their organi tion. So far from having gone too far in int fering with managements and putting in n men, Sir Stafford Cripps, it seems to be wid held, has not yet gone far enough. His o remaining critics appear to be those who wou fight any interference with the "rights property," even if the result were to lose us t war. There are quite a lot of them.

LABOUR AND COMMON WEALTH

HALF a century has passed, this Easter, since he I.L.P. started its brilliant if erratic career at Bradford. It was from the first what the Fabian Society never tried to become, a mass organisation with branches all over the country. It preached ts Socialist gospel with the ethical fervour that haracterised every popular movement in English politics from the Levellers to the Chartists. Together with the Trade Union Movement, it gave birth to the Labour Party, and at the height of its nfluence supplied it with most of its leaders and deas. For many years, before the Labour Party built up its organised groups of individual members in the constituencies, the I.L.P. was he body which Socialists who were not manual workers naturally joined. In its ranks miners rom South Wales and Durham with shipwrights from Clyde and Tyne contrived to work appily with a contingent of professional men and eachers which grew rapidly during the first World War. Since it broke with the Labour Party nd adopted an eccentric and doctrinaire policy which reduced its membership to a defeatist emnant, a gap has opened in our political life. s Common Wealth, which held its first annual onference at Manchester, while the I.L.P. elebrated its jubilee, capable of taking its place? t is too soon to answer that question. Common Wealth can attract members from the middle class whom the Labour Party has failed to win. It as in its front ranks some popular personalities. Thanks to the party truce it has done well in a eries of by-elections. But as yet few would enture to estimate its capacity to grow and volve into something more than an ephemeral roup formed for protest and propaganda during n abnormal interlude in our political life.

The Labour Party has lost much of the attraction once had for the younger generation of techniians, teachers and other members of the middle lass. The trade unions dominate it and their ontingent in Parliament is elderly. During the ar it has been handicapped by the political truce, while over its future hangs the shadow of a possible post-war coalition. It seems to lack ambition and no-one is quite sure that it aims at power and an absolute majority in the Commons. Until it finds much more dynamic leadership, there is no need to resort to snobbery as the explanation of its failure to attract the numerous section of the middle class which can be won for Socialism. The danger is that if some such body as Common Wealth fails to enlist these people, who have as yet no congenial spiritual home, many of them may drift into some disguised form of Fascism.

Common Wealth issued from Manchester an invitation to other progressive parties to consider some form of friendly arrangement. It may have had in mind the conclusion, when the truce comes to an end, of a loose electoral agreement. There are seats which it might win in semi-suburban and rural areas, where the chances of Labour are poor. The proper solution of this difficulty would be the adoption of the alternative vote, a device that falls far short of the more ambitious scheme of Proportional Representation to which the Labour Party is stoutly opposed. Failing this remedy, would that Party consent to abandon some of these constituencies to a friendly rival? It is to be feared that the suggestion comes too late, and that the Party Executive has already decided to place its ban on Common Wealth. If its Conference approves this intolerant measure, there can be no fruitful negotiations. The result may not be what Transport House expects. Smothered under the truce, the capacity of the Labour Party to expand will steadily diminish as the years run on, and it may discover too late that the younger generation has gone over either to Common Wealth or the Communists. For this difficulty a stubborn insistence on discipline is no solution. The Labour Party can recover its former attraction for youth only when its conduct suggests that its first concern is for the ideas it professes. Were that its state of mind it would not frown on every possible ally.

NORTH OF HITLER

N the past few weeks there have been developments in the North of Europe affecting Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.

News from Denmark is rare, and escape now is ractically impossible: they are no "liegemen o the Dane" who mount the battlements at lsinore, and the enemy watches every metre of e coast. However, one of the leaders of Danish sistance has lately reached England.

He has brought news that the tide of resistance s risen in Denmark to proportions which have armed the Germans. Sabotage has increased two stages. The first was at the beginning of st autumn when the Danish volunteers from the ke Ilmen front returned to Denmark on leave; ere was rioting, and the Germans appointed new minister in Copenhagen and a new comander-in-chief, and forced a change of governent with the pro-German Scavenius as premier. he second stage was at the beginning of this year, hen organised *saboteur* squads concentrated rticularly on the railways.

The Danish railways are a tenuous but vital k in German communications with Norway d Finland, both directly and through Sweden, d not a night passes now but something happens them. Some of this is admitted in the Danish ess and over the radio, but it is safe, this inmer tells me, to multiply by ten what is admitted out sabotage, and to multiply again by ten the mber of Danes stated to be in prison for resistce, which is thus something over three thousand.

This Danish sabotage is skilfully organised, d there is secret training going on in Denmark r specific military operations in connection th it at a suitable military conjuncture, which y be occasioned by Allied landings in Norway.

The news from Sweden is of increasing public ger with the Germans. At the university town of Uppsala some Swedish Nazis were very nearly lynched. The police had to fire blank shot at a crowd to save them. Swedish wrath rises slowly, but there is volume in it. It has risen in stages during the past few weeks. First the Swedes found that the Germans had been flying arms across Sweden in courier planes. Next Swedish porters on the Finnish frontier station at Haparanda found some large-scale maps of Sweden, printed in Germany in 1940. Finally, there was the affair of the submarines. Recently a Swedish submarine, *Ulven*, sank mysteriously in Swedish waters. A few days later the German ship *Altkirch*, sister ship of the *Altmark*, fired on another Swedish submarine, *Draken*, also in Swedish waters; there have been two notes from Stockholm to Berlin about *Draken*, the second one because of the inadequacy of the German reply to the first.

The second Swedish note was both sharp and revealing. It revealed that, during the search for *Ulven*, minesweepers had found anchored German mines inside Swedish waters off the west coast. It stated that these mines had now been removed and that the Swedish navy had been instructed to take action against ships of any belligerent power which, by laying mines or firing or otherwise, contravened the prohibition of warlike acts within Swedish waters.

The Wilhelmstrasse went into Swedish affairs during the exchange of notes as a means of trying to lay the blame on *Draken* for its own incident. *Draken*, said the Germans, had misled the *Altkirch*. It had behaved "in a manner suggestive of preparations for attack." Namely, *Draken* had submerged. The Germans invoked a Swedish admiralty instruction to submarines of August, 1940, which was at the time communicated to Germany, not to submerge in the vicinity of German vessels. The second Swedish reply was to the effect that the order was Swedish business, and that it did not justify German warlike activities in Swedish waters not apparent on the surface! It reminded the Germans also that Sweden had refused their request (at the time the order was given) to hold their own naval exercises in the Baltic rather than off the west coast "in order to avoid confusion."

Public suspicion has increased during these diplomatic developments. At first it was felt in Sweden that the *Altkirch* commander was nervous, and that he had supposed *Draken* to be a British submarine. Then it was felt that the commander had other reasons to be nervous. Namely, would the Swedes have found the illicit mines in their search for *Ulven*? The press is asking whether *Ulven* was not a victim of the illicit mines.

Another fact from the North of Europe which is worrying the Germans is the increasing wish of Finland to secede. It is confirmed that the Finnish Foreign Minister, Herra Henrik Ramsay, has been in Berlin and has seen Ribbentrop. The Germans made no fuss about the visit, as they did in the case of the other satellites. They may have feared an anti-climax. At the same time the staff of the American Legation at Helsinki has left for Stockholm. There seems some reason to believe that Herra Ramsay had told Ribbentrop that Washington had given Finland a "last chance" of getting out of the war by intervening with Moscow for a separate peace for Finland. But that after his return from Berlin, the Finnish Government had told Washington that the moment was not yet fitting.

"Recently a 'Danish' view was expressed, possibly for Finnish consumption, that Germany might, through the intervention of Bulgaria, which is not at war with Russia, conclude a separate peace with Russia." This view was expressed by the Danish Nazi weekly *Kritisk Ugerevy*.

Svenska Pressen, Helsinki organ of the Swedish Finns, commenting on the departure of the Americans, says: "About few things is there greater unity here than that our only enemy is Russia and that friendship with the United States is invaluable." By the Swedes themselves this is seen as an amazing attempt to serve God and Mammon.

Behind all Northern considerations looms the question which would arise in the event of Allied landings in Norway—the question of German communications with Norway and with Finland. During the last year they have become increasingly tenuous. When there is no ice in the Baltic there are Russian submarines to interfere increasingly with communications with Finland. In Norway the Germans have been manifesting their increasing dependence upon rail transport by building railways, particularly in the North. Danish saboteurs are keeping much powder dry. The Germans would be tempted to make new demands upon Sweden.

At the same time Swedish power has been growing both actually and relatively. The Swedish army is a well-equipped and well-trained force, and the navy is already a match for the German. Even before the recent incidents there was no doubt whatsoever but that if Germany made new traffic demands Sweden would refuse them. In fact, the Premier, Hr. Hansson, stated some time ago that he wished even the present transit concession, which allows the Germans to move through Sweden only unarmed troops who are on leave, were at an end.

I was present myself at the press gathering at the Swedish Foreign Office in the summer of 1940 following that concession, which was forced upon Sweden; and I can testify to the unwilling atmosphere in which it was made. The Swedish official who presided talked of it as an Irishman talks about fairies. He did not even give the concession a name. There had been, he said, an "important change" made in Swedish foreign policy *in view of the cessation of hostilities in Norway*. German journalists at that conference did not, or could not, disguise their irritation at the "un-Nordic" politeness the Swedes showed them. They could find no fault with it. I watched one of them doodling peevishly and screwing up the scraps of his Nordic subconscious into a waste-paper basket.

But it was so then—hostilities in Norway had ceased. And the Swedes, who privately had always advised us from their window over Germany against Chamberlain, thought that maybe hostilities had ceased altogether except for the mere but most regrettable matter of Britain, whom at least they had saved from an embroilment with Russia over another transit question. But now the Swedish press is saying perhaps the cessation of hostilities in Norway was an illusion. And the public, angry as intellectual bulls, is asking whether the *status quo* with the belligerents should not be restored. ERIC DANCY

REGIONAL ENGLAND

THE Labour Party is the latest of a large number of bodies to issue proposals for the reform of Local Government.* The outstanding feature of its plan is that it has gone over to Regionalism, though it is careful to explain that the Regionalism it wants has nothing to do with the Civil Defence Regions set up during the war. The purpose of the Civil Defence Regions is to take over government should the country be disorganised by invasion. The Civil Defence Regions are not Local Government; they are Central Government operating through Regional Commissioners, which is quite another thing. Nor are their areas for the most part at all suitable for local government purposes; for, though most people agree that areas of local administration ought for many services to be larger than they are, the Civil Defence Regions are too large—too large to enlist that local spirit and consciousness of community without which Local Government cannot be alive or responsive to democratic needs. It may, or may not, be desirable to carry on permanently some further measure of decentralisation from Whitehall; but the common opinion seems to be that after the war the system ought to be swept away. There is much to be said for decentralisation of certain departments, such as the Ministry of Labour with its far-flung network of local Employment Exchanges. There is almost nothing to be said for tying together the decentralised work of such departments under a co-ordinating Regional Commissioner, who could only interpose a further obstacle in the way of speedy and effective local action.

Having ruled out the Civil Defence Regions, the Labour Party Report comes down on the side of a different kind of Regionalism, based on elected Regional Councils which would take over from the existing local authorities most of the major functions of Local Government. Within the proposed Regions there would, under the scheme, be smaller Area authorities, with similarly elected Councils; and these bodies would carry on the bigger duties of Local Government together with such additional functions as might be delegated to them by the Regional Councils. There would be, under the scheme, only two kinds of Councils—Regional Councils and Area Councils. Apparently all the rest of the existing highly complex structures would be swept away. The Regions would take over the whole of education, town and country planning, most housing, main drainage, major roads, fire services, hospitals, health centres, and other institutions, public assistance, licensing, refuse disposal, and a number of other functions, leaving to the Areas only minor services or detailed administration under regional by-laws. Among these secondary services, left to the Areas, are, however, Maternity and Child Welfare, Small Holdings as well as Allotments, sanitary and other inspection, sewerage, minor roads, purely local housing schemes, and the detailed execution of town and country planning.

Clearly, in passing judgment on this scheme, a good deal depends on the intentions of its framers about the sizes of the Regions and Areas which they propose. On this matter they are somewhat vague. They suggest indeed that the Regions "would probably be an adaptation of the existing County areas, with amalgamation and absorption of existing Authorities, where necessary, to achieve a satisfactory unit." But what does this really mean? It could mean, in England, anything between two or a dozen and thirty or forty Regions; but the difference between ten and forty would be one of kind and not merely of degree. Again, the Report suggests that "the size and number of Areas (within the Regions) would be determined by population, rateable value, administrative convenience, and the balance of town and country." It goes on to say that "this would require an amalgamation of many Urban and Rural Authorities, and where possible the basis of this would be an existing County Borough."

This, surely, is an evasion rather than a solution of the problem. If the Areas are to be based, wherever possible, on County Boroughs, and therefore, presumably larger than most of them now are so as to include their suburbs, how big are the Regions meant to be? What is to happen in parts of the country where County Boroughs join on to each other and form virtually a single town—Newcastle and Gateshead, Manchester and Salford, Brighton and Hove, and many others? The Report lays down that town and country must be brought together under a common administration. Does this mean that a Greater Birmingham, or a Greater Manchester, including its rural fringes, is to become merely an Area within a wider Region; and, if so, what becomes of the view expressed in the Report that the spirit of the local community must be given adequate room for expression?

In effect, the Labour Party scheme bears all the marks of an attempt at reconciling irreconcilable things. It wants to bring town and country within a single sphere of administration without treating the country merely as a fringe to the town. It therefore rejects the notion favoured by the Association of Municipal Corporations, which would in effect absorb most of the rest of the country into a number of greatly enlarged County Boroughs. On the other hand, it also rejects the notion favoured by the County Councils of reabsorbing the County Boroughs into the Counties, and treating the County as the basic unit of Local Government. It appears to go halfway to meet this latter view by treating the County as a possible basis for the Region, and then takes away the effect of this by proposing to make the County Borough the nucleus for the smaller Area Authorities which it suggests. This ignores the obvious fact that such cities as Birmingham cannot possibly constitute smaller authorities within a Region based on a single County. Birmingham might be a smaller authority within a region covering the whole of the West Midlands, but hardly in anything less than this.

The difficulty is, of course, greatest when one comes to London; and here the Labour Party Report simply lies down and dies. Of London, we are told that "the problem bristles with difficulties but if there be a general measure of agreement among the existing local authorities we believe that a satisfactory solution could be found on the basis of the principles advocated in this Report."

Blah, blah! "If there be a general measure of agreement!" Who in his senses supposes that the existing local authorities are in the least likely to agree upon anything that will require really large changes in the structure of Local Government? This, again, is merely shoving aside a problem instead of attempting to solve it. The London problem is admittedly very difficult to solve; but it is pretty plain that the way of solving it is not to wait for the existing authorities to agree, but to start out from the evident fact that Greater London needs some form of unified government, and then try to devise a form which will be acceptable to the majority, not of the existing authorities, but of the citizens.

The Labour Report in its general approach states what the essential desiderata are. Th are, first, administrative units large enough manage the main services efficiently along up- date lines, and yet small and coherent enough have some sense of community; and, secondl lesser areas within these large units small enou to give the individual citizen a real sense counting in the management of local affairs, a basis of common neighbourhood. Surely, th answer to the first of these requirements is to found in Regional units differing greatly different parts of the country, but in general, the more populous areas, based on the Coun Boroughs as centres and including not merely suburban and rural fringe, but also lesser neig bouring towns which can be regarded as satellit Such an answer clearly involves, not building the existing Counties, but in many cases ignorin county boundaries altogether. Only in the mo rural areas is a County, or sometimes a combin tion of smaller Counties, suitable as the area for Regional Authority.

If this is the right line of approach to the region problem, it follows that it is quite wrong envisage the smaller, Area, Authorities in term of the existing County Boroughs—much more enlargements of these Boroughs so as to includ these suburbs and surrounding countryside. would be much more sensible, in considering th question, to approach it from the angle of the Paris or the Urban District or, within the larger term of the Ward or pre-existing separate communit which has been swallowed up by the outwar spread of city building. Let the small unit, it is to give the ordinary citizen his chance playing his democratic part in civic affairs, b small—small enough to constitute a real grou of neighbours—and not, as the Labour Repor appears to suggest, neither the one thing nor th other. No doubt the reason for not tackling th problem from this angle is largely the wish avoid antagonising the County Boroughs by leavin them a shadowy being as Area Authorities whe most of the powers they now possess have bee transferred to the proposed Regions. But is thi mere shadow of power likely to satisfy them and, if the system were established, would it b possible to get men of any calibre to serve o bodies covering large areas and populations bu shorn of nearly all real power? A man of calibr may be ready to serve on the Parish or Urba Council of the place where he lives and form pa of a real local community. If he seeks a wide sphere of service, he will want to get on to th Regional Council, where the real power will li

It has, of course, to be admitted that the proble of Local Government is exceedingly difficult solve. It is pretty certain that any scheme th could be put forward would be opposed by mos of the existing Local Authorities. Nothing th pleases the County Borough Councils is likel to please the County Councils; and nothing th pleases either will fail to antagonise both th Urban and the Rural District Councils. All the authorities, when they get together in the several associations, will oppose anything th does not transfer power to their particular typ of authority at the expense of other types; and for the most part, the officials of the various typ of authority will take the same divergent view as the elected Councillors. Parishes are not th only units of government that have parish pumps and there is no greater possibility in the rest the country than in London of arriving at a agreed result. That is why the question of Loc Government reform, despite its evident urgency i connection with post-war planning, is persistentl shelved by the Government; and that is why eve the Labour Party has taken refuge in ambiguitie Yet before long the problem must be tackled; fo how can we possibly re-plan our county unt we know in what hands the practical executio of the plans is to be placed?

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that good made of raw materials in short supply owing war conditions are advertised in this paper shoul not be taken as an indication that they are necessari available for export.

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* *The Future of Local Government: the Labour Party's Post-war Policy. Labour Party. 2d.*

A LONDON DIARY

SIR WILLIAM JOWITT : A lot of questions have een sent on to me asking the Government to ppoint a Minister of Social Security. M.P.s eep asking and resolutions come from this Conference and that organisation every day. Do ou know why no Minister is appointed?

OFFICIAL : I believe it's because Beveridge imself would be the obvious Minister and he ould be such a nuisance. He would want to ush things. And some members of the War Cabinet don't like him. Old——, but I won't ention names, won't have him at any price.

SIR W. J. : Well, I can't give that as a reason, an I?

OFFICIAL : You'll have to say that the various Departments affected by the proposals are making reliminary surveys and necessary preparations, nd that no good purpose would be served by ppointing a Minister at this stage.

SIR W. J. : But will that go down? Members ant a Minister whom they can hold responsible; hey can't make a lot of anonymous people in arious departments report progress and explain ow far advanced their preparations are. A Minister's political life and reputation would be t stake. He'd want to get something done.

OFFICIAL : Exactly, Sir William, why it's very mportant for no Minister to be appointed and or you as Minister for Reconstruction without esponsibilities in the matter, to reply for the Government. Shall I draft your reply now, ir William?

* * *

"What the nation requires is, not more gentle- en, but more men with sufficient sense not to re whether they are gentlemen or not." Both entiment and the language are characteristic of rofessor Tawney. He is discussing the "prob- m of the Public Schools," and the particular roposal that calls for this comment is that our ublic schools would be properly democratised y the addition of more "special" places for hildren from elementary or secondary schools. The problem, says Mr. Tawney, is, in fact, ommonly misunderstood: "It is not how to elect sons of common persons who are capable f profiting by attendance at a public boarding chool. It is how to modify the atmosphere, utlook and manner of life of the more expensive oarding schools in such a way as to make it eneficial for ordinary boys to attend them." Mr. awney has a number of far-reaching suggestions r doing this. He points out that most of the pub- c schools are, in fact, not ancient, but compara- vely recent devices to meet the requirements of e new industrial well-to-do, who in the nineteenth ntury wanted their children to acquire the anners and speech of the ruling class into which ey were being admitted. Boarding schools ere required because the boys had to be educated a distance from Yorkshire and Lancashire, here their fathers had their businesses. To-day r. Tawney thinks we might use many of the blic schools as great day-schools to serve the stricts in which they happen to be and that others uld be used to accommodate groups of selected ys from day schools for short periods of resi- ntial education. After discussing various pro- sals, Mr. Tawney adds, "Like most educa- nal reforms, proposals of the kind will continue, doubt, to be dismissed as moonshine, until y come to be acted on, when the schools nned in accordance with them will be described institutions peculiarly characteristic of the itish genius, each with a distinctive tradition immemorial antiquity, and all offering unique portunities for the training of character and ucation for leadership." But you had better d the article, which is in the new (April-July) ue of that very remarkable and too little blicised periodical, the *Political Quarterly*.

* * *

Easter Conferences very properly talked much Beveridge. But by making a hanging matter Beveridge the Government has successfully shed out of the public mind the Uthwatt oposals which are no less important. Without at least the measure of national control over urban land that is suggested in the Uthwatt scheme, the rebuilding of blitzed towns and the post-war development of England as a whole will be a ghastly and destructive farce. If allowed, property owners would again build ribbons along the high roads, construct warehouses round the steps of St. Paul's, put bungalow slums in the green belts, and, wherever it pays in the rush for housing after the war, put up blocks of jerry-built flats without thought for their architecture, amenities or their effect on the economic or social life of the community. Every disinterested expert and every public-spirited Mayor or Town Clerk and Councillor is aware of the issue. So, it seems, are some of the property owners. I have in front of me a most illuminating account of a recent meeting of more than one thousand property owners in the Connaught Rooms. The idea of the meeting seems to have been to persuade the small man who owns a villa and garden that his interests are the same as those of Lord Brocket, who, very naturally, addressed the meeting on "The Threat to Private Ownership," with special reference to the land and the Uthwatt Report. Lord Brocket, who is best known as an enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Chamberlain's policy both before and after Munich, was certainly peculiarly qualified for the job. Though not a member of the old landed aristocracy (his father, a brewer, left £413,000 and he himself is chairman of five brewery companies), Lord Brocket owns 13,000 acres in England and 62,000 in Scotland. Lord Brocket now vehemently attacks those who want to see applied the Uthwatt principle that the land should be planned in the public interest and that the benefits of increased property values created by public control of the land should accrue to the public and not to the private owner.

* * *

To understand the Soviet-Polish business read the story of the Polish invasion of the Ukraine and of Lenin's counter-invasion to the gates of Warsaw. Read Lloyd-George's *The Truth About the Peace Treaties*. The horror of what was done to Poles and Russians by Russians and Poles will not, he says, bear telling. But he has a remarkable account of the Polish view of the Peace. It begins:

> No one gave more trouble than the Poles. Having once upon a time been the most formidable military Power in Central Europe—when Prussia was a starveling Duchy—there were few provinces in a vast area inhabited by a variety of races that Poland could not claim as being historically her inheritance of which she had been reft. Drunk with the new wine of liberty supplied to her by the Allies, she fancied herself once more the resistless mistress of Central Europe. Self-determination did not suit her ambitions. She coveted Galicia, the Ukraine, Lithuania and parts of White Russia . . .

* * *

Here is a gem from a recent German broadcast in Czech:

> The entire Czech nation remembers to-day in deep gratefulness the birthday of the Führer, Adolf Hitler, who, by his far-reaching decisions, has guaranteed our protection against destructive Bolshevism and against exploitation by the plutocracies.

CRITIC

POST WAR PARADE

COMING shortly ! world release !
Super symphony of peace !
Global pageant of the age !
Hot news from the world's front page !
Victory's glorious cavalcade,
Post-War Parade !

It's soul-stirring ! it's sublime !
Epic highspot of all time !
It's climactic ! it's immense !
Action ! History ! Suspense !
Victory's dynamic plan !
Everything for everyman !
It's a knock-out ! it's a thrill !
It's a riot of goodwill !
American- and British-made,
Post-War Parade !
Galaxy of wartime big-shots, heading a terrific cast !
See the rainbow arch of triumph ! scenes of splendour unsurpassed !
See the hosts of light advancing, hordes of darkness reeling back !
See unfurled above the nations the star-spangled Union Jack !
See the peoples' chosen leaders flinging wide the golden gates !
Hear massed anthems of thanksgiving from the semi-sovereign states !
See the argosies of plenty winging from the purple west,
Bathed in dazzling floods of sunrise, Disneycolor at its best !

A Two-Nations Production,
We proudly present
Scenes of world reconstruction
By the world-Parliament !

It's colossal ! it's a wow !
It's in preparation now !
Something that you must not miss,
Ready for the armistice !
Something different ! something new !
Two Nations Inc. ; will bring to you
This amazing ! blazing !
Earth-shaking !
Breath-taking !
Brand new !
Grand new
Post-War Parade ! ! !

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. J. Thompson.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Astrologers who claim to know by stargazing the date when the Second Front will open will maintain secrecy when they meet next week at Harrogate.—*Sunday Chronicle.*

Mr. J. J. Davidson (Lab., Maryhill) thought to have medical inspection done by women was to upset the basis of our family life.—*Daily Herald.*

His long legs dangling from the table, Sir John said: "In these times we must make every sacrifice possible. But if a company director sees a loophole in the income tax laws he should make as much money as he can for his shareholders and himself." —Interview with Sir J. Ramsden, Bt., in *Daily Express.*

But the strangest job of all is done by the A.T.S. —keeping moths out of 7,000 bearskin caps of the Brigade of Guards.—*Sunday Express.*

Well-educated gentleman, age 40, of ultra smart appearance and address, recently returned from abroad, having impaired eyesight and wearing spectacles, wishes to meet lady of similar social qualifications, aged 30–45; also wearing glasses (not horn-rims); companionship and sincere friendship desired.—Advertisement in *West London Observer.*

The first time you see a coolie work it will make you roar with laughter. It is really ludicrous. Don't think, however, that I am running down the Indian, because I am very fond of him and I think he is a fine fellow, though some are better than others. Mr. Dossetor described as "exasperating to the last extent" the gibe that we were denying freedom to India.—Rev. F. E. Dossetor, Rector of Cranford, reported in the *Kettering Leader and Guardian.*

THE WOOD AND THE TREES

FIRST, a big furniture shop. A table and four chairs, £65; an elephantine sofa and two easy chairs, called a suite, £48; a poor Oriental rug that ought to cost £4 at most, £35; a pair of cotton sheets, £5. Wartime scarcity and purchase tax, no doubt, account for the monstrous prices. But if you are getting married you can obtain a permit to buy Utility Furniture, inoffensive in design and about the price of peacetime things of good quality; regulation kitchen chairs 14*s*. 3*d*.; a bed £4 7*s*.; a wardrobe £15 16*s*.; a chest of drawers £10 10*s*., say £35, with bedding, for your bedroom. Only for the well-to-do, Utility, evidently. "What are they made of?" I asked the young assistant. "Compo," said he in an indescribably sinister tone. "And what is Compo?" "Stiffened cardboard; very hard-wearing, of course." But, he insinuated, how much better to buy our suite on easy terms for £80.

Next, a second-hand shop. Nothing in it but rubbish, rubble almost, crawl of moth and smell of mouse: a what-not, a washstand, its marble top cracked. Nobody there, either. Leave it quickly, before someone horrible heaves up out of the dark basement stair.

An old friend, an antique dealer, observed me refreshing my soul by gazing at a pretty desk in his window. "It's no good you looking at that," he said austerely (well knowing my purse, of which he has seen the bottom on several occasions), "It's £70, and I shall sell it at once. Getting it was another matter. It is useless for a small man like me to go to sales; every single thing is bought up by the Foreign Ring." "And what do they do with the things?" "Export them to South Africa and America." We part sadly, agreeing that if we were dictators we should prohibit the export of British antiques. Every civilised nation does so, and our native art is so small in quantity, and in supreme quality almost confined to the furniture of the eighteenth century. Yet we dissipate our treasure as if it were endless.

The road passed one of the modern furniture-designers of repute. His window, still impressive though reduced to peephole size, framed a large space scattered with oblong settles and cocktail cupboards like streamlined sarcophagi. He uses wood respectfully and well, and yet his things are depressing, and naturally fabulously dear. One could furnish with Hepplewhite at two-thirds the cost.

Home by Tottenham Court Road, a stomach-turning experience. Yes, of course, there is Heals, and decent reproductions, of fine workmanship, at Bartholomew and Fletchers. But what masses of horror!—it is extraordinary how vulgar the manufacturers can make these simple cubic forms.

Furniture for the rich, furniture for the bourgeois. Where is the furniture for the people? Even allowing for the present scarcity, where is there any sign of furniture made for people who earn £3 a week? Well, to be exact, one sign, the traditional chair-making industry of the Wycombe valley. Even among the Utility things, the Windsor chairs, absolutely traditional, are the only ones which working men can afford—properly, that is, and not by the debt-slavery of the instalment system. Otherwise, I have had to wait till I could look at pre-war illustrated magazines. There, among the photographed living-rooms, are plenty of gay, good, sensible chairs and tables, not too big for small houses, pleasant to live with, clearly made for ordinary people. But the captions invariably say "Finnish," "Norwegian," "Swedish Modern," especially Swedish. The ironic feature is that except for the Aalto chair, the furniture is obviously based upon intelligent study of British work of the great period.

Now why can Finns and Swedes make good cheap furniture when we do not? They are not rich nations, and I defy anybody to prove that their native heritage is equal to ours. The answer is surely that they have a healthier social philosophy, at least about modern housing. Their designers and manufacturers deliberately set out to make fine furniture which working people can buy. And here is the heart of our furnishing problem. We are going to be faced with plenishing new houses by the million, apart from the normal demands of marriage and replacement. There is no preparation for this need save the suites which the workers, mercifully, cannot afford, or the leavings of Victorian boarding-houses. Do we mean the nation to spend its life with Compo? And here we can dispose of the shopkeeping cliché: "Customers don't want good furniture, they like modern-style veneering." Customers, in my belief, are simply ignorant, modest, and hypnotised by smart salesmanship into buying the newest and dearest nastiness. If they were offered good furniture they would buy it fast enough, especially workmen, who recognise good craftsmanship. What is needed is supply; the customers will provide the demand, never doubt it.

Here, then, is a plan for supply. First, the Ministry of Planning should survey the normal peacetime resources of household goods. Some of them we are organised to produce in adequate amounts; among them, cutlery of stainless steel, and linen, or rather cotton, pots and pans, vacuum cleaners; the last must be cheapened. Staffordshire can make masses of china, and some of the least expensive pottery is charming. Wedgwood still leads the world in design. We have excellent textiles, which can be both cheap and beautiful. The fast dyes are lovely now, and it costs no more to print good patterns than bad. Our furnishing designs are far better than our dressgood prints, I don't know why. And our woven materials are superb, the simplest weaves often the best, which is convenient for conversion from dear, as they are, to cheap, as they must be. We make glass of good technical quality, but poor design, with a handful of exceptions. That supreme craftsman, the skilled glassblower, naturally takes pleasure in elaborating his wonderful material. To my mind there is no modern glass to compare with the Swedish Orrefors, and their most exquisite pieces are not the heavy engraved *objets d'art* of recent years, but the plain slender table glass which they have sold in mass as stock patterns for a long time. It may not be possible to kidnap Simon Gate to teach our glass-makers their job, but it would be richly worth our national while to send apprentices with creative talent to Orrefors to learn, if trade rules allowed such a sensible procedure.

When we come to furniture properly speaking, there is a great blank, which in itself constitutes a thrilling opportunity. First we should make up our minds that we are going to create a large new industry. Then we should survey the field for designers; not those who have been making the luxury modern furniture; they are no more likely to produce the right beds and tables for the workers than architects of luxury flats are likely to design the right houses. There are many cabinet makers, small men, who are still working to their own designs. They can be found chiefly in provincial towns, and they could be used both for design and training, which will have to be done on a big scale. The things to be made divide naturally into those which are better mass-produced, and those which should be made in comparatively small works. Among the first are kitchen fittings. The guiding principle is that no housewife should have to stoop at her work or to lift weight above elbow-level. The standard stove is three feet high, whether it is gas or electric. The other working surfaces, such as draining boards, tables, and so on, should be the same, with a table for seated work. Only, there should be an alternative height of 33 inches for the small woman. There should be a very large variety of shelf and cupboard sets, on the unit system, so that each woman can organise her fittings to suit her space. The mass production of such furniture is already on its way.

The furniture for living and bedrooms is fundamentally unsuited to standardisation or mass production. To realise this it is only necessary to visit any institution, from a government office to an orphanage, and notice the gloom inspired by the furniture. In fact, large furniture works
are conscious of this drawback, and try to ov
come it by putting in little fancy bits of veneeri
to make their sets look "different," with aw
results, viz., the sick-making suburban furnitu
in the shops. The need is for a number of differe
centres of manufacture, to use different designe
and preserve the interest and character of t
workshops.

This is where furniture might make a ma
contribution to post-war reconstruction. For t
obvious place to create the new industry is in t
Scottish Highlands. The water power is availab
if the new Board sees its duty as it should, to cre
local industry. The wood is available, for the mo
valuable wood for modern furniture is birch,
account of its gay colour and of its pliabili
There is wool for upholstery and a weavi
tradition already. The cabinet-makers, as el
where, would have to be trained; but the Hig
landers are marvellous craftsmen; the Glasg
men who made the "Queen Mary," and who c
do anything with wood and metal, came, ma
of them, out of the glens. Scotland has, thou
not in the Highlands, a fine tradition of cabi
making dating remotely to the Adams period
building, and more recently to Liberty's workme
It should be noted the Board of Trade Journal
February 1933 calculates that the employme
given annually per million h.p. of energy is 2 m
in the aluminium industry, 1.4 in carbide,
men in textiles, 240 in woodworking, includi
furniture trades. The works should be
operative, though not entirely run by the Scotti
Co-operative, because the furniture should
obtainable in any sort of shop. The indust
would have to be subsidised, to start with,
provide the works and to pay the trainers a
managers really well, but the demand
furniture is so great, and so steady, that
should soon reach an economic condition.

The remaining problem is the wood. T
Highlands have plenty to make a start, and t
supply could be ensured by Forestry Commissi
reorganisation. The Scottish Commission shou
be separated from the English body. That is p
praying for; it is besotted with spruce for p
props and railway sleepers, and can think
nothing but short-term profit. The reader m
find it hard to believe, but it is said that the Co
mission, when it took over Glen Urquhart, burn
the birchwoods to save the trouble of felli
them. In sober sense we ought to import pitpro
from Siberia, where the conifer reseeds itself, a
use our limited forest-land for the deciduous tr
for which our climate is ideally suited. In a
case, Scotland should not be sacrificed to th
oblong disfigurements, the Forestry spru
plantations. The Scottish Commission shou
be a national service in the true sense, planti
specifically for carpenters' work, the fast-growi
trees, like birch and ash, for use as the furnitu
industry increases, and a proportion of the sl
growers—oak, beech, walnut, sycamore—for t
nation's children. The woodlands of Britain
vanishing, and for a couple of centuries they ha
been planted by the landowners, (Dr. Johnso
aspersions on Scottish scenery for its lack
"vegetable ornament" must have just preced
the fashion for planting). It is the State,
nobody, who will set acorns now. But perhaps
has been lack of planned demand which has fi
the Forestry Commission in its evil habits. Wh
ever the reason, they will not easily change.
new Commission, with new and young personn
working for a new and local demand, would
able to do better. From the forest to the wo
shop, from the workshop to the workman's ho
we can, if we wish it, make a regeneration of t
Highlands, creative work for their people,
renaissance of domestic art for the whole natio
But it is first necessary to grasp the idea in
entirety, to see both the wood and the trees.

FREDA WHITE

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post
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STONES FOR BREAD

DEAR ——, I take the opportunity of lying n hospital with a fractured jaw and dysentery to reak my four months' silence. When continents re in the melting pot it is quite normal for my ast note to come from Southend, this one from Poona. I have in fact been sharing the massive xperience of hundreds of thousands of British men—going on overseas service—and I think it's experience of some moment for the world. We are all other than we were.

Leaving home began it. One does not do it ightly. The heart takes part, and the mind evalues things once taken for granted. It is, f you like, a test of love, a renewal. When our reat trooper pushed her steel bows through the arrow dock gates, five thousand of us thronged he rails, silently, knowing something momentous as happening. A private leaning by me threw penny on to the quay-stones, to hear the last ing of English stone. "Good luck, England," e shouted. Hundreds of coins followed.

The next two months were a profound educaion. To see the English winter blaze within a ortnight into the blue mulatto heat of the doldrums shook us considerably. It was so un-English. Our nostalgia shredded out in this new brilliance, and in the sight of the kingfisher-blue lying fish in their sudden, gay little flocks. There as a certain void of feeling; England insensibly became an inaccessible abstraction about which e could do little. When the ship's news-sheet aid that Cripps had left the War Cabinet, for nstance, we knew we could do nothing. We aced the future, and at our first port of call became citizens of the world and delegates of a reat country. A new role.

We went ashore for a formal march past the ivic dignitaries, led by the drums of my own egiment. We were the first convoy to touch here, and seemingly did much to convince the opulace that Britain was waging war. We were ubmerged in cheers and hugs, V signs and lowers. Our drummers are all colliers from South Wales whose dislike of "bull" and blanco has ong outweighed their pleasure in the flute; they ave complained constantly at wasting time on rum practice and Church parade. Ironically fell to them on that day to do something to nite the New World with the Old. Blanco pays.

The ship was monstrously overcrowded; a elte luxury liner, it reflected precisely the social ystem that constructed it. The 500 officers had pretty good time; all berthed in cabins, albeit verloaded; dining in a saloon as vulgarly umptuous as any classy hotel, with menus printed aily in bastard French and meals of impeccable uality and length; champagne at 7s. 6d. a ottle, spirits and liqueurs at 6d. The other ranks umbered upwards of 4,000. They lived in the olling bowels of the ship, in tiered bunks that rammed the holds. Their quarters stank of weat and vomit and oranges, of which there as a weekly free issue. As soon as we entered armer zones the congestion was relieved by a ush to the open decks, where they slept like Arabs nder the great tree of the stars. There was me resentment at the extreme difference etween "First" and "Third," and one man was ourt-martialled for saying the officers were doing ell for themselves. The truth of his statement as not the point at issue.

Notwithstanding, the morale was excellent. ife had its compensations; the ocean, ports of ll in two continents, the sight of whales and batrosses and shipwrecked sailors whom we escued within sight of Table Mountain. And the ip itself we converted into something of a oating Utopia, with nightly concerts and daily rains Trusts, Quiz contests and piano recitals, d public debates on the troop deck at a spot hich was christened Hyde Park Corner. The dience at these meetings wore P.T. shorts, ank from beer and lemonade bottles and stood p and discussed Emigration, War, and Social stice; a padre advocated Socialism, a Palestine w collective farming, a lieutenant-colonel a litical Sermon on the Mount. *Pas mal!*

We had a good time in South Africa, too, though it was easy to see that the hospitable English there are very apprehensive about their future. The Zulu is doing well at his school books and is permitted to walk on the pavements now; the Indian enclave continues to prosper and build; the fraternising Tommy is accused of weakening the colour bar. The white man feels lonely for the future. In Brazil a white man and a coloured girl waved joyously from the verandah of their bedroom; they appeared to have got over surface differences. So, one thought, had the French. Why don't we? I wondered, watching Natal vanish at the rate of twenty knots as we made a dash for India.

I spent the week before we arrived at Bombay in the sick bay, and saw my destiny through the porthole—red hills with a thin scurf of grass and a waterfront of commercial buildings white as leprosy. I resolved to rinse my mind of preconceptions, to write no more poems about Europe and to speak as I found. What I say now I say humbly.

Bombay had great crowds at the races and long queues for food. The Governor was dispensing relief among the starving villages of his presidency. In Bengal, the stress has shifted from politics to food; famine relief is a demand Hindu and Moslem can make together. Born and bred in South Wales, I thought I knew the face of poverty, but the poverty of India is like acid in the brain. The despatch of food ships from Europe and the disgorgement of contractors' hoardings will not alter the emaciation of Bombay's aged and deformed beggars. The villages surrounding our camp bear likewise the permanent weals of destitution. The camp followers take the swill from our bins; every child is a beggar. The picaresque still survives. The birdcatcher wanders the streets of Poona, a cage of singing birds in each hand; the mongoose will fight the viper for a couple of chips, if sahib please. But the tumbling ordure of the villages, the dark hovels that have neither door nor chimney, the vultures and piedogs about the rotting carcase of a goat, the naked children and verminous old men, the shrivelled women whose faces bear the hard cast of experience and not its enriching gentleness—this is what broke Nehru's heart.

The day we reached our camp the dry heat broke and it rained more than somewhat. The little station, crowded with peasants, idlers, char wallahs and flies, stank abominably. I lived there for two days, offloading our baggage train, drenched and shivering. The dry nullahs became brown streams and swept over the unsurfaced track that wound up to our tents, pitched in a dustbowl between bare ridges. My truck got bogged at dusk and I watched the bullocks, failing to swim the flood with their wooden "bile" carts and yelling carters, swept downstream with unchanging placid features.

Camp life developed its own austere routine of heat and hard work. We made roads on Christmas Day, and ate scraggy duck basted all night on wood fires. We swam daily in a brown canal among the millet fields, met a flock of grey monkeys, killed snakes and scorpions, and wrote long letters home when the paraffin ration allowed us to light hurricane lamps.

So simple and primitive an existence demanded some distraction and parties of men went to the rest camp in Poona. The train was never less than three hours late.

Poona cantonment adjoins Poona City. The city roads are marked with notices— "Out of Bounds to All Ranks." There is smallpox there, amongst other things. The cantonment is spacious, the houses detached and the roads tree-lined; hotels and cinemas abound. You travel by tonga or taxi. The taximen are also pandars. We have little commerce with the Indians, except servants and shop assistants. I have only met the little *durzis* and *moochis* who walk into the ward and ask Sahib if they shall make him a shirt or a shoe. They say smallpox very bad, prices much high, rice and wheat too costly. Being mostly Moslems they defame the Hindu traders; *banias* very greedy, charge too much. There is a current of mistrust. The best bookshop I have seen outside London was suddenly put out of bounds, the owner jailed, and myself thereby prevented from buying any more poetry. And our troops make holiday there unperturbed. But in hospital I've heard some terrible tales from officers who helped to suppress the insurgents in Bihar. They have little sympathy left, and say there is much corruption between Indian and Indian. The system has bred wealthy parasites. Contractors live on the Services; moneylenders on the peasantry; and Hinduism has monstrous habits. Congress, despite the support of Press and Big Business, seems played out, but judging by the Gandhi-Linlithgow letters the opposites are intransigeant. The argument is as fundamental as Rousseau's, and seems as unreal. One regrets the brevity of Cripps's visit. He might return either as a judge or mediator—for a long stay, though. No blitz here.

All in all, soldiering out here is a nasty job and is likely to get worse. An awful lot of people are asking for bread; and all they seem to be handing out these days is stones.

ALUN LEWIS

"THEY CAME TO A CITY"

"IF this play draws," I said to myself outside the Globe Theatre, "there's more hope in the world than I supposed." I must have spoken aloud, because a voice at my elbow said, "*For* the world, you mean." "No, I don't," I snapped, trying to attract a taxi. "Perhaps"—I caught the words while making a dash for it—"the one depends on the other." Yes, there was something in that. And that is why Mr. Priestley wrote *They Came to a City*. It is a play constructed to encourage faith in a post-war world, happy and wholesome and wealthy, where the people shall have obtained their rights and war and poverty are no more. The steps which must be taken in order to create such a world do not fall within the dramatist's theme, but these evidently include the elimination of capitalism and class. Bankers, speculators, landowners, ladies and gentlemen, and bourgeois with an ideal of rosy, cosy domesticity can never enter that Promised Land, nor can they like the Pisgah view they get of it. The characters who do are a tired old charwoman (admirably played by Miss Ada Reeve), a virile mechanic rightly (if obviously) called "Joe," and a waitress of character, though she may have been a tart, called Alice. A manager of a provincial branch-bank would have also been a fit citizen had he not been devoted to an exceptionally jealous, small-minded, but pretty wife. (Miss Renee Gadd was all that, she cried prettily and pettishly.) There is, too, one other who loves the City; Phillipa, daughter of the timid and exclusive Lady Loxfield. Cramped by convention she was yet young enough to welcome this vision of future freedom. Perhaps even her mother might have done so once—long ago. But we, the audience, never see the City and its inhabitants. We only gather what it is like and how they behave from reports, and still more indirectly, deduce all that from the different types who, having visited it, either dislike it or find it is their spiritual home. The object of the play is to present a Social Ideal indirectly to our imagination; and enthusiasm, or lack of enthusiasm for it, is made by the dramatist the test of his characters and of human worth: a mistake, one to which I shall return.

If you have already a general idea of some book or place, and then ask different sorts of people whose tastes you know what each thinks of it, you can get from their answers a notion whether or not you would like that book or that place yourself. It is by such means that Mr. Priestley enables us to assess the City of his hopes. On the stage that method may be interesting, but it cannot be exciting. Only just before the curtain falls is there any dramatic tension in the play. Then Joe decides that he must leave the City in order to declare its beauty to the world; and Alice, though presumably it swarms with greater and brighter Joes, that she must follow him, woman-like, to sustain him in what may often prove to be a despairing mission. And excellent as the playing of this pair together had been throughout, in this final speech Mr. John Clements achieved a moving elocutionary triumph, and in this scene Miss Googie Withers an emotional one. They acted very well indeed. But till then there had not been a moment of dramatic choice or tension in the play. The first act is spent in revealing, by means of naturalistic dialogue, the characters—the sheep and the goats—through whose respective reports we are presently to see, stereoscopically so to speak, the ideal social community. And not only the first long act, but also a large part of the second and last, was employed in preparation. Then wasn't the play dull? You may well ask that. No: it was not dull, but it was slow, decidedly slow. Not dull, because Mr. Priestley has, as everybody knows, a lively sense of character and humour. He never gives his men and women better jokes or sharper things to say than they could have thought of themselves, like Bernard Shaw, yet he makes their opinions and temperaments tell. Again, for a while at least, the situation and whereabouts of this mixed company of human beings keeps our curiosity agog. Singly, or in pairs, they assemble in a bare, semi-dark stone place, say upon a castle-terrace, on one side of which rises a high bronze door. One after the other they enter, themselves as bewildered as we are: a lady and her daughter, a brisk, middle-class speculator, a poor old woman with a basket, a hatless country gentleman with a golf club, a dainty young woman in distress, and next (together with Alice the waitress) the former's mild-mannered husband (the bank manager), and lastly the strong, glum, handsome mechanic. Where are they? They do not know. They tell each other where they came from and where they wanted to go. And when they describe what each remembers doing last we guess at once that they have died. They themselves, however, never apparently discover that. It is irrelevant to the dramatist's purpose. Indeed, it is better we, too, should presently forget it, for is not the point of the play to be that some of them choose to go back to life, preferring the world as it is to the post-revolutionary world? Mr. Priestley has merely used the device of coming back to consciousness after death in order to assemble a miscellaneous collection of people whose several reactions to the City of the Future shall at once suggest its beauties and determine their own moral value as individuals to society.

Dawn breaks when the curtain rises on Act II, and from the battlements they can see the great bright City below, with people thronging its handsome streets. Presently the bronze door slides aside, and they are free to explore. Sooner or later all will take advantage of that: the speculator in hope of finding a telegraph office and perhaps a new investment; the golfing squire, Sir George Gedney (very well and quietly interpreted by Mr. A. E. Matthews), and Lady Loxfield as hesitating, rather bored tourists—and so on. Only the old charwoman instantly goes through without a word. To our surprise, Joe at first refuses to accompany the eagerly curious Alice. He has seen on his voyages so many cities beautiful from a distance which proved to be full of men and women covered with rags and sores. He is a born revolutionary who has not been convinced that communal effort could produce anything beautiful—until he had seen the City. And what do the reactions of the others contribute to our idea of it? The Lady, of course, misses deferential manners; the Squire compares the pleasure of gregarious holiday-making unfavourably with duck-shooting with a few cronies; the speculator finds himself lectured on as an anti-social specimen by an economist before an audience of delighted children; the banker's wife is made wretched by the sight of so many people enjoying themselves when she can only find happiness in monopolising one man. The old "char" is in heaven: she has a bright, clean room to herself and the people are a pleasure to work for.

The vision of the desired Future that emerges is uninspiring. Only the usual general features are dwelt upon: efficient workshops and public dances—in short, easy hours, excellent food and housing, and radiant bank-holidays. "Good things, brother"—like the wind on the heath, no doubt, but as an ideal disappointing. Mr. Priestley has made the common mistake of many other reformers: because needed changes can only be brought about by communal co-operation, desirable life is represented as consisting chiefly of communal joys; and, mistake number two, he has represented those who value the private life and all that springs from it as either plumb fools like his squire or distorted personalities like his banker's wife. DESMOND MACCARTHY

WILL IT BE SO AGAIN?

Will it be so again
That the brave, the gifted are lost from view,
And empty, scheming men
Are left in peace their lunatic age to renew?
Will it be so again?

Must it be always so
That the best are chosen to fall and sleep
Like seeds, and we too slow
In claiming the earth they quicken, and the old
usurpers reap
What they could not sow?

Will it be so again—
The jungle code and the hypocrite gesture?
A poppy wreath for the slain
And a cut-throat world for the living? that stale
imposture
Played on us once again?

Will it be as before—
Peace, with no heart or mind to ensue it,
Guttering down to war
Like a libertine to his grave? We should not be
surprised: we knew it
Happen before.

Shall it be so again?
Call not upon the glorious dead
To be your witnesses then.
The living alone can nail to their promise the ones
who said
It shall not be so again.

C. DAY LEWIS

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The English Town Exhibition at 109 Charing Cross Road

Eleven societies have collaborated to provide this exhibition at the St. Martin's School of Art, which remains open till May 8th. In the recent exhibitions concerned with the rebuilding of Britain attention has been concentrated on flats built on what are called, in a question-begging manner, "functional" lines. The chief interest of this show lies in the photographs of small houses that are well designed in a less austere idiom. The problem of rebuilding demands the use of both solutions simultaneously, and it is a pity that in architecture, as in most activities, the loudest voices are those of the intolerant champions of one method or the other. The photographs of old buildings are engaging, though ill-presented; the modern drawings hardly justify the space given to them.

"Strike a New Note," at the Prince of Wales

Fourth on the programme of this George Black revue comes "A Discovery": Mr. Sid Field. An East-Ender with a bullying and whining accent, sparring gestures, huge padded shoulders (one of them tends to slip), the Cockney pretending to be a flash bruiser and breaking down into grins of self-explanation. Double-jointed wrists, a taking eye, and patter fresh as a daisy complete the appeal of this new comedian; so good is he that we are almost disappointed to find him reappearing afterwards in other roles which, though funny, are less endearing. The rest of the show is gay with dancing and looks well above the average, and at times an idea that wouldn't disgrace a Little Revue.

THE MOVIES

"Lucky Jordan," at the Plaza
"A Night to Remember," at the Gaumont and Marble Arch

The good film comes and goes like a comet. It is predicted, we focus our telescopes, Welles or Duvivier shoots in view, and when it is all over the sky resumes its dim courses. One looks round at familiar constellations. Those born under Tarzan will find the master triumphing again in jungles at the Regal. Formby is somewhere or other, with—I suspect—a mulish grin and a banjo. Miss Crawford catches the eye at a fresh angle; for a few moments, at the Empire, she is the soul of France. Monty Woolley is seen delicately entering slush. And to complete this reading of the star-map, we have British Paramount News ending with bombs falling on Germany and the commentator chanting, with exquisite taste: "Going down, going down! Everything for the little Nazi . . ."

Lucky Jordan just escapes from the well-known categories. Only just, and with Alan Ladd starring and Frank Tuttle directing, I expected much more. This is nothing like so good a film as *Gun for Hire*. The gangsters are brought into line with the war, and the result, for me, is as unconvincing as when Tarzan pays one of his visits to New York. For the hero—Alan Ladd with his sinister shine—has to show in the end that he is as patriotic as anyone else, and won't any more sell those tank plans to the foreign guys. It's a mistake trying to make one kind of hero into another. But, despite the rapid thaws of patriotism, *Lucky Jordan* manages to keep taut and sardonic most of the time; the Ladd has a way with him at a billiard table or bundling dames into cars; and there is a long sequence on the best thriller level when everyone stalks everyone else in a tulip garden. At one point gangster meets Nazi and there is a quick show-down of ideologies; rat scorns rat; obviously the two would find it difficult to do business together. But Chicago is made to take rather too high a line about it.

A Night to Remember is easy to forget. Comedy creeps, with Loretta Young and Brian Aherne, some pleasant domestic pitfalls and a story increasingly mysterious and commonplace.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

ETHICS WITHOUT REVELATION

SIR,—What a flood we seem to have undammed! It is good of you to ask me if I should like to add anything to what I wrote, and certainly I should like to thank the people who have written to me, including the abusive anonymous gentleman, and to say that I can't possibly attempt to reply, time and postage being what it is, to them all.

As for the main issue, leaving your spate of red herrings on one side, it seems to come to this. You want to base your ethics on "reason and experience," that is on what you would call the "best" human thought, plus a synthesis of modern knowledge. So does Hitler. Like some of your supporters, you may be inclined to vary your position by relying on "ethical intuitions." Again, so does Hitler. He says quite simply that "reason and experience" plus his "intuition" of what is right and proper, tell him that the only thing to be done with people like Jews and Poles is to exterminate them. You disagree, but your mistake is to think you can defeat him when you accept his adumbration of the basis of ethics. On that basis there is a lot to be said for him, especially when you both agree in ruling our from your "synthesis" religion and Christian experience. It seems to me that the only way out of the impasse is to insist that ethics, social, political, and personal, depend upon some very much more ultimate principle than any you are offering. Hitler and his ethics must be part of any genuine synthesis of thought and knowledge, and the problem is to find some means of deciding whether it is a "good" or "bad" part, to be accepted or rejected. Unless we know what the world is about, that is, unless we know what people are for, we haven't any such means. Religion offers you exactly the principle you need. It tells you that the world is God's creation, describes His purpose, and indicates the lines along which human affairs must be conducted. It shows you how to decide whether any particular human thought is "best" or not by offering you "absolutes." Of course it is quite possible for Hitler to deny God; but then we should be dealing with something that can be defended with some prospect of success, instead of being lost in a morass of "expediency." When we argue on that basis, even if we think it odd of God to choose the Jews, we know that we must treat them decently even though it were to our own hindrance. We are then dealing with ethics where there is some prospect of establishing them firmly; but when we abandon religion, only expediency remains.

Now I beg you not to cloud the issue by smelling faggots. I am not telling you that churchmen have never abused their high principles. Of course they have. You know the old tag about the corruption of the best. The price of liberty, or truth, or justice, or compassion, or anything else which you and I think worth while, is still eternal vigilance, and you need to keep just as close an eye on the Great Church as on the Great State, for man is, as we learnt in childhood, a fallen creature. What really worries me about your position is, that I doubt if you and your supporting correspondents have any idea of the truly formidable case being presented by you to Fascism. I think that you are too lightly supposing that the Christian virtues, which you still accept, are secure in their own right, as it were, even though you have abandoned the theistic principles from which they derive. If this correspondence has successfully directed attention to that problem, it will have been very much worth while.
R. A. Edwards

Dartington.

[Here is the rector of Dartington again insisting that a belief in doctrinal Christianity would be a help in defeating Fascism. Any positive active and moral faith would, of course, make those who held it immune from the attacks of Satanism. But, as I said in my former reply, the question is not the utility of doctrinal Christianity, but its credibility. Neither I nor (judging from the number of practising Christians) about ninety per cent. of the population can in these days believe the required doctrines.

The rector is in an utter confusion. When Christianity was a really powerful moral force in society it was an other-worldly religion. Gandhi is its most prominent exponent in the world to-day. The religion of the last three centuries in Western Europe has not been Christianity, which made this world a preparation for the next, but a belief in the progress of mankind to a more happy, equal, free and brotherly life on this earth. It is this temporal Idealism, not an already compromised Other-Worldliness, that is challenged in the sorry chaos of our day. The Church itself now only answers Hitler in temporal terms, and the argument inevitably turns (however much this frightens the rector) on such matters as whether co-operation and friendship between peoples are not in point of fact better than the bloody alternatives. And in this argument the Church has not played a distinguished part. In Italy and Spain the Catholic Church was Fascism's ally and in Germany the Church made no protest until Hitler attacked its rights and privileges. Hitler found Churchmen less difficult to fool than intellectuals.

Any genuine faith defeats inertia or half-hearted belief. Many individual Christians have in our day witnessed to their faith. Niemoller is still in gaol. Ossietsky, who adopted the pacifist, and, I think, correct interpretation of Christianity, died a martyr. Many intellectuals bore the same testimony until death. Communists proved the most stubborn because their faith is an organised religion at least as strong as Fascism; and, in my view, ultimately stronger. My argument was that we need a Socialist faith, which takes account of British traditions, in this country. It has modern knowledge behind it and the hope of the future before it. Only if we believe our stuff, shall we conquer.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

"LEAVE THE CHAP ALONE"

Sir,—May I allay Mr. Mortimer's fears that there exists a sinister body which will not "leave the chap alone," or that members of the Artists International Association whose recent exhibition caused your critic such discomfort "have not realised with what doctrines they are associated"?

The artists who showed their work in the John Lewis air-raid shelter are all members of the A.I.A., can all read, and are all in agreement with its policy and activities, though their style may vary from that of Augustus John to that of John Tunnard.

The exhibition organising committee consisted of artists and designers, while selection was undertaken by other A.I.A. members, including such artists as Henry Moore, James Fitton and Julian Trevelyan.

It is a pity that Mr. Mortimer should not have discussed what was, to us, perhaps the most interesting aspect of this experiment—that in this exhibition designers, architects and a poet (Cecil Day Lewis) collaborated with the painters in trying to make one room into a related whole instead of containing a series of unco-ordinated works. We can only regret that your criticism was not published until it was too late for your readers to visit the exhibition and compare their own reactions with Mr. Mortimer's.

It is odd to read in your pages of artists described as "these peculiar creatures," and for them to be chastised for attempting to work in co-operation. Through co-operation we were able to assist in the stopping of a complete ban being placed on the manufacture of all artists' materials during the war. Through co-operation we were able to rescue thirty German and Czech anti-Nazi artists from Czechoslovakia even though the frontiers had been closed, and to offer them hospitality in this country. Through co-operation we were able to take part in the opposition to official policy and retain some of our self-respect during the bitter period of the Spanish Civil War. By co-operation we hope to be able to play some part in the post-war reconstruction and in retaining the essential individual freedom of the artist.

I really do not understand what Mr. Mortimer means when he writes about *imposing* co-operation. If artists want to work together and experiment in new types of exhibitions, surely it is not for Mr. Mortimer to insist on their *not* co-operating. This appears to be just the kind of "interference by progressive people" which we deprecate just as much as does your critic.
Misha Black,
Chairman, A.I.A.

[Mr. Mortimer writes: "Of course nobody wishes to prevent artists co-operating to their hearts' content. It was the A.I.A. that declared that they 'must' be prepared to co-operate. I am glad that the chairman does not support this view, but anti-Fascists should be more careful not to use language that smells of Dr. Goebbels."—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

Sir,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer refers aptly to the dangers of artistic ideology as evidenced in the catalogue of the Artists' International Association, held in John Lewis's basement.

And it was, I think, Mr. Edward Sackville West who recently suggested—also in your columns—that Shoshtakovich had "sinned against the Holy Ghost" in allowing his music to take on political state-inspired implications.

Yet an organisation called the Workers' Music Association is most actively engaged in "stimulating the composition of music appropriate to our time," which apparently involves the holding of meetings to counteract the infiltration of Fascist ideas via composers and artists with insufficient appreciation of their sociological functions.

I surmise that the Artists' International Association tends in the same general direction, although perhaps less crudely.

Surely it is the plain duty of all Left-wing, progressively-minded folk (in the genuine, not the "phoney" sense) to see that spurious theories of this kind are discredited. Otherwise, as Raymond Mortimer suggests, "the first result will be to turn all self-respecting artists into Tories."

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JONATHAN CAPE

This letter would hardly be necessary were it not that eminent musicians are associated with the W.M.A. (*e.g.* Granville, Bantock, Benjamin Britten, Edward J. Dent, John Ireland, and others—I omit Alan Bush, because his ideological theories are already fairly well known); one wonders how many of these artists are whole-hearted subscribers to the ideas of the movement and how many are under the impression that their vice-presidents' donation (whatever it may be) is assisting a scheme more comparable with C.E.M.A.

There is no mistaking the underlying philosophy. We are told in the foreword to a little booklet on "Twenty Soviet Composers," and the development of music in the Soviet Union proves what nonsense it is to claim that art has no connection with politics. I am not sure what are the present ideas of the Soviet State on this point—Alexander Werth's recent book suggests that whatever intention of linking up art and politics may have existed is now on the wane.

Whether this is so or no, the fact remains that what the Soviet State may have done in the years following a revolution has no connection with what is desirable in a country which can proudly point to a higher level of musical composition (leaving out the solitary figure of Elgar) than for several hundred years. Imagine a "Beveridge" Cantata by Vaughan Williams; or a Whitsuntide Conference Symphony by William Walton!

Yet the W.M.A. solemnly assured us a few weeks ago that, whilst the Royal Choral Society—in its performances of Handel and Elgar—"looked backwards," the member choirs of the Association "look forward" because the works they perform have "living" words calculated to inspire and stimulate the workers.

Is there not a serious risk that all this mumbo-jumbo may here and there fall on the ears of a young man or woman who is taking to musical or artistic appreciation for the first time? I believe there is, and I suggest that here is another very trenchant reason for letting these theories be known for what they are—artistic nonsense. R. H. HOPKINS

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

SIR,—After reading "Critic's" statement in your last issue, with regard to what was described as "Group Clinics," I feel compelled to correct a generally expressed idea that an attempt to introduce an organised medical service must of necessity break down that personal relationship between doctor and patient, the value of which cannot be denied. In order to maintain such a relationship, the system of freedom of choice of doctor has been insisted on in almost every scheme that has been put forward for formulating a new service.

It is envisaged that the so-called Health Centre for each district would be staffed by at least 10–15 local practitioners, thus providing as wide a choice for those residing in a given area as in fact exists in the majority of small town or country areas at present.

A limit to the number of patients on each doctor's list has already been accepted in the regulations of the National Health Insurance service, and this must be maintained, and in fact, considerably reduced, if one of the worst features of medical practice to-day is to be eliminated—namely, the hopelessly overcrowded panel surgeries of the poorer districts, in contrast to the more prosperous areas, where a doctor can earn at least an equal income by attending a very much smaller number of patients.

Provided, therefore, that this freedom of choice is maintained in a new service, there will be no more interference with such personal relationship as exists to-day. There will arise occasions of emergency when a patient may be attended by a doctor "on duty" who is not that of his own choice, but such an eventuality is a frequent occurrence to-day, when the patient is seen by one of his own doctor's partners.

With regard to his second point, it is of course a fact that the vast majority of practitioners have put nearly all their savings into their practices, and have as a result to look to the eventual sale of these in order to retire. They would not therefore consider a new State service which did not compensate them, either directly or by a suitable pension on retirement.

Finally, I would disagree that only a minority welcome the Beveridge principle of a State medical service. What they justly fear is the administration of such a service. Given a service wherein the central, and particularly the regional, control is so constructed as to permit of considerable representation, possibly democratically elected, of members of the medical profession, as opposed to rule by lay civil servants, the advantages of an organised service to the medical practitioners as a whole are obvious.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

SIR,—I wonder if "Critic" realises how familiar the arguments his medical friend advances against State Medicine sound to Socialist ears. Whenever State control is at issue we hear of "the dead hand of officialdom," of individual hardship. Were "Critic" to ask the young doctors in the Services he would find the majority keen supporters of the Beveridge Report, and looking forward to post-war work under a State Medical Service unfettered by all manner of financial considerations which should never enter into the prevention and cure of disease. The intimate doctor-patient relationship can well be preserved even though the family doctor, instead of buying and selling his practice, is paid by the State.

As to the other side of the question, the serious deficiencies and anomalies of our present medical service, far too little is known about it by the general public and no doubt the Left press is somewhat to blame. DOCTOR'S WIFE

R.A.F. EDUCATION

SIR,—My own experiences in connection with education in the Services may be of interest. When I started lecture and discussion periods I had a certain amount of pioneering work to do to get the right spirit among the airmen.

The first thing obviously is to get the approval of one's C.O., and keep him interested in what goes on. Secondly, I make the periods compulsory, otherwise some airmen always seem to have other "dates" to keep. As I make these periods at the same time each week it is regarded as a parade. Thirdly, I do not do too much talking myself, but simply direct the flow of discussion. I may, of course, sum up conclusions.

We start off with a Quiz. General knowledge is on a bad scale, even among the better educated airmen. The few who are really good at answering are rather the bookish type. Although all *read* the daily papers the news there is certainly not absorbed. However, the Quiz warms them up and does interest them.

Next, at the present time, each airman in turn (one or two a week) describes his civilian job. Last week we had a fish frier and Lord K.'s footman; this week we have an underwriter at Lloyd's and a bank clerk. These talks make the men concerned idea-conscious and help to develop character.

The last item is a discussion group of four or six airmen, whom I nominate the day before, on a specified subject. This week it is on the desirability of abolition of the death sentence; last week it was whether the present birth-rate is a menace to Britain. Our range is a wide one. It did include the Beveridge Report, which seemed to interest the airmen less than one would have thought. International and Imperial politics interest them less than matters nearer home.

While their powers of discussion were poor to start with they have now improved tremendously, and open up fields of thought which I hear them discussing afterwards. The sensible argument appeals to the majority. I encourage the younger men to do most of the talking, and they are not shy now. The talking is done quite informally, and I allow smoking.

I give them short talks on such subjects as anti-Semitism, rumours about the Americans, etc. I find the airmen appreciate a balanced argument when it is brought before them. There is little, if any, apathy or cynicism if one gradually prods things along. You have to be really keen and interested yourself, of course.

The one thing you must not be—discouraged.

ADJUTANT, R.A.F.

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CRESSET PRESS

BOOKS IN GENERAL

The young people of 1830 were, what we would call nowadays, a war generation. Those who reached adult life at the time of the July Revolution were born and spent their early childhood during the worst years of the Napoleonic era, in an atmosphere of impending doom, in the midst of increasing bad news—lost battles and military disasters. Their parents were weary of war, disgusted with tyranny and despairing of the future. The children inherited the restlessness and *spleen* of their parents and, when they reached maturity, they had a passionate desire to destroy everything and to leave no vestige of the past.

A most striking change of the age was in the relationship between the sexes, in the attitude of women towards the conduct of their own lives. This is not to suggest that women had been slaves during the eighteenth century. On the contrary, there have been few periods in French history when women have been more important or more influential, or lived, morally speaking, more freely, But women had enjoyed this liberty in a man-made world—albeit a world that appreciated women—through the exercise of feminine wiles and feminine diplomacy.

One of the most curious manifestations of the claims for complete spiritual freedom for women was the philosophy of a crazy sect called *Evadanisme* which flourished during the reign of Louis-Philippe. It is sometimes called *Evadisme* or *Evadaisme*, but it is all the same thing. These are only various forms of a word made from the names *Eve* and *Adam*. It is an androgynous religion composed of male and female elements, and, to compensate woman for the humble part she has hitherto played in the religions of the world, her name, *Eve*, comes first. The leader and prophet of this new religion was a man called Ganneau who styled himself *Le Mapah*—a name made from the first syllable of *maman* and the first syllable of *papa*. He is mentioned in Dumas's *Mémoires*, in *Les Dieux Inconnus* of Gerard de Nerval, in a collection of articles by various authors called *Vignettes Romantiques* and in Eliphas Lévi's *Histoire de la Magie*.

Ganneau had two separate and distinct periods in his life. The first, when he was a fashionable spendthrift which ended in 1830 when he was about thirty, and the second, a period of about twenty years, when he was a prophet and even a god.

During the first period he was an elegant young man, well known at the cafes on the Boulevard de Gand. He enjoyed gambling, cards, wine and women. On frequent occasions he made large fortunes by gaming and betting—for he seems to have had great luck—but money always flowed through his fingers like water. Dumas tells us that to supplement his income he used to practise the art or science of phrenology. His father had been a hatter and Ganneau, by studying the various sizes and shapes of blocks and hats in his father's shop, had evolved, with the help of treatises on anatomy, a theory of his own on phrenology.

It is said that one day a very beautiful woman came to consult him and to have her fortune read by the bumps of her head. Ganneau was anxious and preoccupied that day and sunk in gloom, for he had lost a large sum of money at cards and he did not know what was to become of him. He did not take in the beauty of his consultant, his thoughts were elsewhere as he was absent-mindedly kneading her skull with his long sensitive finger and talking meanwhile in the slow harmonious voice which was later to mesmerise his followers. There must have been some unconscious magic in his touch. He was gently stroking the bump at the back of her head which phrenologists call the bump of amorousness, still talking without heeding what he was saying, when, suddenly, she burst into tears and, throwing her arms about his neck, cried, "I love you!"

Then Ganneau looked at her and, for the first time, saw that she was very beautiful.

After this day she came on several occasions to consult him and Ganneau fell in love with her too. She was a married woman but they felt that they could no longer live without one another, and they decided to elope together.

On the day fixed for their flight she came to him covered with jewels and her bag full of gold. They were jewels her husband had given her and it was her husband's money she had taken with her. Ganneau refused to leave with her until she had given everything back. She came next day empty-handed, with no jewels, with nothing but the clothes she wore, and they departed together.

They lived happily together for a time and under her influence he even gave up gambling. But she fell ill and died. Ganneau, stricken down by grief, fell ill also, and it was thought that he too would die. But his beloved came to him one night, as he slept, begged him to live for her sake, and to go forth and preach a new religion which would regenerate mankind and whose principles she laid down for him. This was *Evadisme*.

When Ganneau returned to life he was no longer a man; he had become a god. He was no longer Ganneau, but called himself, "celui qui fut Ganneau." He was now *Le Mapah*.

As *Le Mapah* he lived in a filthy studio on the *Quai Bourbon* in the *Ile Saint Louis* which he called *le grabat*. *Le grabat* was his apostolic seat. His disciples were artists of all sorts, painters, sculptors, and also writers. A follower of his who comes as a surprise—whether he was a follower through curiosity or conviction, is not known—was the Romantic publisher Hetzel, well known for his business sense and his contracts merciless to authors.

Le Mapah had given up his smart clothes. Now he wore a workman's blue smock and with that a battered old felt hat and a woman's long pelisse. This made him look like an old dervish. He had a long auburn beard which came down to his belt and his face had all the majesty of those of the prophets. Most noticeable were his curious hypnotic eyes and his long, white, very carefully tended hands which he used gracefully and with great effect.

A contemporary picture of 1830 shows *Le Mapah* reclining on a divan and smoking a *chibouk* as he gazes into the distance with mesmeric eyes. He is surrounded by several young men as ecstatic looking as he.

Eliphas Lévi describes a visit that he paid to *le grabat* in 1839. He talks of the extraordinary eloquence of the Master and of the magnetic force of his gaze. He expounded his doctrine in biblical and lyrical language which had a certain literary quality—though it was very extravagant in conception and imagery—and it was largely a manifestation of the exaltation of sex and sensuality. He could speak at great length without pausing for rest, but when he had finished there was always a thin rim of white foam at the edge of his lips.

There was one woman present who looked like a somnambulist, or as if she were in a trance. The *Mapah* claimed that day that he was Louis XVI, who had come back to earth for "une oeuvre de régénération" and that the woman at his side was Marie-Antoinette.

At first he used to propagate his theories by means of small cabalistic figures in plaster, but these proved too expensive for the slender purse of the prophet, and he replaced them by printed pamphlets, which, curiously enough, continued to be called "platras." These pamphlets were decorated with monstrous figures like oriental idols; human figures with elephants' trunks, figures with multiple arms, legs and heads.

The most famous of these "platras," entitled *Baptême et Mariage*, is preserved at the *Bibliotèque Nationale* in Paris. It is a long composition in biblical style which sets out to reverse the Christian dogma of the worship of Mary, mother of God, and of Jesus, Son of God and of Mary.

> Mary is no longer the Mother. She is the wife.
> Jesus Christ is no longer the son. He is the husband.
> The old world (confession) is coming to an end.
> The new world (expansion) is about to begin.

He goes on to relate how the sacrifice of human love is consummated and says that a new baptism is at hand, that by the tears of Mary all sin and stain will be washed away and humanity will be saved.

Mary was once the great God-Mother, now she is the wife of the Man-God of the earth. And with Mary the Mother *Le Mapah* places Mary-Magdalen the Whore. These two are linked together to make one person.

Jesus Christ is greeted in the name of the great *Evadah*, and proclaimed to the world as the great personification of the male unity of the *Word* and baptised in the name of *Christ-Adam le Génésique*. Finally, the *Mapah* greets them both together as the great symbol, the personification of unity in duality, under the one name "*Androgyne-Evadam.*"

> Humanity is now constituted for the great betrothal.
> The hour of human virility has come.
> The era of *Evadah* is at hand.
> Hosannah!
>
> Given from our "grabat" in our town of Paris, the great *Eda* of the earth.
> On the first day of the first year of the *Evadah* era,
> In the thirty-third year of our age.
> The *Mapah*.

The *Mapah* used to send these "platras" to cabinet ministers to show them where was the true life. And he once addressed one to Pope Gregory XVI from "notre grabat apostolique" telling him that the era of Christianity was at an end, that the *Evadah* was about to begin and summoning him to stand aside for the great *Mapah*.

Another day he went to a brothel and summoned all the inmates. The girls wondered who he was, this strange man, *Le Mapah*, some Eastern potentate, they thought, who wanted twelve or fifteen women at the same time.

"Ladies," he said to them. "Do you know who you are?"

They giggled and tittered and did not know what to reply, but he did not need an answer.

"You are pioneers," he said, "apostles and martyrs of a new religion."

Then he explained to them in colourful, biblical and esoteric language that they were the first comers who were protesting against the vested interest of the honest woman.

Complaints were frequently sent to the government protesting against the indecency and obscenity of the *Mapah's* pronouncements and the public prosecutor once considered bringing him to law. But when the police came to the "grabat" to arrest him, he gathered the folds of his smock round him, like a Roman orator his toga, and said with great dignity, "Arrest me! Condemn me! Imprison me! I shall not appeal to the court! I shall appeal only to Humanity!"

The case was not proceeded with. Perhaps the government preferred not to give publicity to his teaching; perhaps they did not wish to make a martyr of him.

One of the *Mapah's* disciples, according to Eliphas Lévi, a weak consumptive youth called Sobrier, was the spark which ignited the powder of the Revolution of 1848. *Evadisme* claimed that the regeneration of the world could come only through revolution. In 1848, during the tense atmosphere of February, Sobrier appeared one day in the most crowded streets of the working-class quarter of Saint-Martin, preceded by two youths, one bearing a lighted torch and the other beating a rally on a drum. Many fell into line behind him, and when a large crowd had collected he harangued them in inflamed language. This, says Lévi, was the beginning of the February Revolution of 1848.

The last years of the *Mapah's* life were sad and disillusioned, when he lost faith even in himself and began to doubt his own divinity. At the end he had only one disciple left, an old Auvergnat chesnut-roaster, and to him he entrusted the duty of propagating his gospel when he was gone. But the disciple does not seem to have carried out the injunctions of the Master, for *Evadisme* is never heard of again.

The *Mapah* himself died some time in 1851.

ENID STARKIE

NOVELS AND STORIES

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter. By CARSON McCULLERS. *Cresset Press.* 9s. 6d.

The Just and the Unjust. By JAMES GOULD COZZENS. *Cape* 8s. 6d.

Russian Short Stories. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

The war has done much to mitigate the traditional xenophobia of the British. The very opposite effect might have been expected, and there is surely encouragement to be found in the now fairly general desire for information about foreign countries. Even France, so obvious a victim for short-sighted vituperation, has been treated with a generous and genuine respect. Russia and America, by the very fact that they are powerful and undefeated allies, have won a more doubtful and irritable interest. The main, or at least the first obstacle to understanding is the monstrous preconceptions with which the British have so long been beset. Has any nation in the world so rich a vocabulary of xenophobic depreciation? Frogs, Chinks, Wogs, Wops, Dagoes, Bolshies, Shonks, Babus . . . the list is interminable.

Both Russia and America have been fitted into complacent patterns of contempt or hatred. America is gunmen, corrupt administration, glamour and hot dogs. Russia is the firing-squad, the O.G.P.U., beards and vodka. Certainly the Americans are more responsible than the Russians; no sovereign State in the history of the world has had such an opportunity for self-explanation as has America in England between the two wars. But Hollywood has betrayed America by adding fuel to British xenophobia.

Books are a better guide than films, because literature is still the purer art. Sales are less exigent than the box office. Each of the three books under review could be a valuable weapon in this battle to understand—the more valuable in that this was not the conscious intention of any one of them.

Miss McCullers' *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, reviewed here a few months ago, was a remarkable literary freak. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (her first novel, and not, as the blurb suggests, a new book) shows many nascent qualities which were later distorted into nightmare by the golden eye. A certain propensity for the gaudy-grim is already evident, but only rarely out of hand. Miss McCullers shares with one of her characters a strong affection for the maimed and disabled, and a preference for self-mutilation as the cause of affliction. But *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is a better book than its follower, because here mutilation has both a wider and a deeper significance. Rather than the bizarre, not wholly uncomic barbarity of a major's wife cutting off her nipples, we are shown five principal characters psychologically mutilated by circumstance. A negro doctor with a message for his race is turned rancid by the failure of his race to understand him. An anarchist agitator is driven to drink by the same kind of apathy. A fourteen-year-old girl has a passion for music, which poverty continually represses and derides. Brannon, the bar owner, longs to understand, but understanding is denied him by ignorance of his own desires. Finally, there is Singer, the deaf-mute, to whom all the other characters turn for consolation. His unique quality is the simplicity of a good heart, but because of his affliction the others credit him with an almost divine understanding. Yet Singer himself is driven to suicide by the insanity and death of a friend, and this betrayal ends an enormously depressing book.

It may be a doubtful taste to recommend such a book as a guide to the American way of life. Certainly full justice is done to those abuses which are peculiar to America, but the book is not an indictment of any one society. It is a statement of individual tragedy which might, in its essentials, spring from almost any social background. Miss McCullers writes with a bitter compassion which gives a deep humanity to her characters, and humanity is precisely the quality which the British deny to foreigners.

A book of such unrelieved despair will certainly be criticised by the jolly for its complete neglect of the silver lining. But Miss McCullers is not a perverse or wilful pessimist. Tragedy here is not dependent on any arbitrary trick of fate; it is inherent in the lives and background of all the characters. There is no happy ending to the book because, in the selected field, there is no happy ending to life. Certainly it is a tragic view of life, but to demand an "all-round picture" is as absurd as to criticise El Greco because there are no Giocondas in his stormy crucifixions. It is depressing to praise an early novel at the expense of a later one, but in the light of this book it must be regretted that Miss McCullers ever wrote *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Her talent is too generous to be profitably sidetracked into idiosyncrasy, and it is very much to be hoped that her next novel will return to the manner of the earlier book.

Mr. Cozzens can be more happily recommended as an exponent of the American way of life. As a novelist he is altogether lacking in the imagination which inspires Miss McCullers, but he is extremely competent and intelligent. The whole book centres round a murder trial in a small provincial town, and most of the characters are either lawyers or the relations of lawyers. *The Just and the Unjust* is a subtle and highly technical vindication of the law, and those readers who find technical detail out of place in fiction will hardly survive the first formidable page. Personally I am addicted to the mysteries of an almost unintelligible language, and ignorance of American legal terms did nothing to impair my keen enjoyment. There is considerable subtlety in the Childerstown reactions to an experience almost unparalleled in its history. The gangsters are foreigners in every sense, despised, feared and hated by the quiet provincials. And yet they are treated with far more than justice. The community is strikingly convincing—sentimental, kind, petty, respectful, quarrelsome, but *as a community* essentially sane and decent. Unlike Miss McCullers, Mr. Cozzens is an optimist, but he is by no means a facile optimist. Though honesty and intelligence are generally triumphant, they are provided with formidable enemies. One can no more criticise Mr. Cozzens for his faith than Miss McCullers for her despair. Indeed, my only strong criticism of *The Just and the Unjust* is a technical one. Frequent deviations from the trial into the social life of the town are both unsatisfactory and unnecessary Every time that the young assistant attorney left the court-room my interest flagged, almost vanished. Any novel which also claims to be a social survey must administer a spoonful of jam for each pill. Mr. Cozzens is a little too economical with his jam.

It is a million miles from Childerstown to Pushkin, and not much less to Babel and Ivanóv. The Soviet Union has increasingly (and how wisely!) insisted on a cultural continuity independent of social transformation. Even among western Communists the old confidence that revolution in society brings with it a revolution in art is withering away. Gorki is a striking example of the contrary. The greatest revolutionary writer of our time, he was also a disciple of Tolstoy and an admirer of Chehov and Andreyev. No writer has been more conscious of the tradition which largely created him, and yet none has been more honest and courageous a revolutionary. For this reason, that Gorki is so much a bridge between nineteenth-century Russia and the Soviet Union, it is a pity that he is represented in this collection by one very short and rather inadequate fragment. For the rest, the pre-revolutionary writers are excellently represented, without a trace of that editorial idiosyncrasy which often mars an anthology. *The Queen of Spades, My Life, The Death of Ivan Ilytch* . . . these familiar masterpieces were an obvious but a wise choice in a collection which is intended as an introduction. There is a reminder, too, of the tremendous talent of Lermontov and the astonishing grim humour of Gogol and Dostoievsky.

The Soviet writers proper receive only fifty out of four hundred and fifty pages, but in the face of so rich a competition for space this must be deemed a generous allowance. Yet one may, I think, complain of the selection. Recent volumes of Soviet stories have shown that this has remained a lively and vigorous art form, inheriting much that was valuable in the Russian tradition, and bravely exploring new social areas. There has been no major Russian prose-writer since Gorki, but there have been many admirable authors of the second class. Perhaps it is fear of repetition which has led the Faber editor to a less familiar and less satisfactory selection. Yet this book admirably illustrates, as almost any selection must, the richness and variety of Russian literature. And perhaps the best approach to modern Russia is a knowledge of the great prose writers of the last century.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

OUR TOWNS

Our Towns: A Close-up. A Study Made During 1939–42. *Oxford University Press.* 5s.

This book does not exaggerate. Slum dwellings do really smell as foul and look as dirty as the report suggests. The smell is a tenacious one, familiar to all who have spent much time in very poor and overcrowded homes—the clinging smell which travels forth with the occupants and yet pervades the rooms long after they are out. This remarkable report directs the public legislative eye towards straight facts which those who have had intimate contact with the very poor knew long ago. The central problem of our social services as organised to-day is the unfamiliarity of many administrators with the basic knowledge about ordinary living conditions. Those who work among poor people are traditionally dumb and passive social workers. Those who administer sit remote in offices. Labour Members of Parliament make speeches, largely culled from recollections of their own childhood or from letters from their own constituents. There is absolutely no effective machinery for bringing together the knowledge of those who work in squalid streets and the power of those who make and administer our social legislation.

The authors of *Our Towns* emphasise this gulf. They were, they say, "impressed by the wealth of knowledge of intimate conditions possessed by some of the persons consulted and the limited extent to which it has found its way into print." They recommend first that experienced field-workers should be given opportunity to "tell the community what they have seen of the life of the people" and secondly that we arrange for "the better sociological training of doctors, teachers, clergy and certain Government servants at the outset of their careers." The Americans have done better than we have in this field. There is a politically active trade union of social workers, whose journal *Social Work* makes dynamic and constructive proposals not only for detailed amelioration of social conditions but throughout the whole political field. In this country the majority of the social welfare personnel still regard politics as something outside their sphere and as disreputable. They labour on, familiar with smells and bugs, feminine dishygiene and stairways used as urinals, without any real effort to agree on constructive proposals or to have their views expressed. Meanwhile, "the administrators of the social service departments fail to get into direct touch with people whose lives are affected by their work. With their unique facilities for gathering social data on a national scale they should employ investigators whose reports should, so far as possible, be published, or at least made available to students."

Our Towns makes a frontal attack on the intelligentsia's obscurantist view that one should speak only good of our poorest comrades. It is surely more sensible to admit that slums breed slum habits of mind which may need a generation of better housing education to eradicate and then to find what are the defects either in education or in storage accommodation which bring about this situation. About education the authors speak ruthlessly and with intense imagination: "Evacuation left us nationally dissatisfied with ourselves as a product of the first half-century of compulsory education." Education, they say, must come from many sources besides the school: "We must try to build the educative community." They also stress the need for rational sexual education. "The whole phenomena of human reproduction should be faced as a matter of the keenest and most proper interest to the young." This they suggest may help adolescents to bridge the gap "between physical and social maturity"—a gap which, expressed in obtrusive laughter and behaviour, may be seen troubling many juveniles clamped into industry and unsupported either by knowledge of themselves, or of that society into which they have to fit.

These quotations are not inserted to enable NEW STATESMAN AND NATION readers to discover the gist of the book from this review and to leave the book itself unread. It is a first-class social document, which contains not only a wealth of information about the social habits of our fellow-citizens, but also some excellent factual appendices, including valuable notes on bedwetting, clothing clubs, nursery schools, nutritional standards, and prosecutions by the N.S.P.C.C.

Incidentally, the report is well written, full of pleasant phrases. It includes after each section a list of remarkable suggestions, including a Public Utility concern to manufacture soluble sanitary towels, a Royal Commission to inquire into the instalment purchase of soft goods and footwear, and an inquiry into the provision of municipal bag-wash facilities. Major criticisms of our present social and economic structure are implicit throughout the document, and so are radical proposals for its alteration.

The Oxford University Press are to be congratulated on producing 143 pages on satisfactory paper with excellent type at only 5*s*. The cardboard cover in which it is bound up is sufficiently palatable to warrant further experiments in this style.

It may appear that the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare, which was responsible for the production of this report, has now completed its job. On the contrary, the job has only just begun. The recommendations and conclusions in this book emphasise problems which many of us had known about for years. We are now offered a constructive set of proposals to discuss and publicise and do something about. This is definitely not a bookshelf book but a social document, which, being read, should be used for political action. Its invitation to the wide range of social welfare personnel to come into the open vocally, and its adjuration to administrators to find out about the impact of the services they are administering, cannot be ignored. The trade union movement should take this document to heart. Increase in wages and decrease in hours will not of themselves make a brave new world. A revolution in education and a rapid housing programme must underpin anything of value in the post-war world. But education in the schools is not enough. Education in living must go forth to people in their homes. Long ago Octavia Hill told us this. Local authorities particularly should review the scope and ability of their health, housing and educational staff in the light of this report.

JOAN S. CLARKE

TRAGEDY ON EAST SIDE

Dark Legend. By FREDERIC WERTHAM. *Duell, Sloane and Pearce.*

Some years ago, in a tenement quarter of New York—names and dates are not given—a smiling boy of seventeen walked out in his socks, bought a bag of candy, and gave himself up to the nearest cop for murder. At home his mother, stabbed thirty-two times with a bread-knife, lay dying; she died soon afterwards in hospital. The candy was for the children huddled in an outer room. There could be no doubt about the facts; poverty and neglect and jealousy; the father dead long ago in Italy, the mother entertaining lovers; Gino had killed his mother. "For the family honour," he said. The act seemed to have brought him happiness; an intelligent and dutiful son, he was ready for the electric chair, and even resented the plea of insanity which resulted in his being committed to a State asylum. Dr. Frederic Wertham, the psychiatrist who pleaded in court and afterwards made Gino the subject of his special study, has written a fascinating book about the case. It includes Gino's story told in his own words—a document of masterly simplicity—and Dr. Wertham's analysis of the motives as they emerged during months of treatment. The whole book, which is written not for specialists but for the general reader, is a model of what such studies in abnormality should be. After reading it we feel that the elucidation is complete, and yet analysis has not blurred the essentially tragic outline of the story. Not merely does Dr. Wertham discover a new complex with its roots in Greek legend—the Orestes complex, an incest-wish leading to murder—but the correspondence between tragedy and neurosis, Furies and compulsions, is worked out here in violence. Gino eased his conflict by killing his mother, whereas the modern Oedipus merely develops a twitch or avoids policemen. There is no chance of our all being saddled with an Orestes complex, because matricide is an essential part of it, and matricide—as Dr. Wertham discovered when he investigated the literature—is exceedingly rare. One can safely read *Dark Legend* without the fear of being too deeply implicated.

Matricide, though rare, has a common pattern:

> Most of the matricides were young, between fifteen and twenty-five. Usually intelligent, they had no histories of juvenile deliquency behind them; they had been, until the time of the murders, apparently normal and well-adjusted young men. Most of them had been excessively attached to their mothers . . . and showed little or no interest in other women. . . . The actual act of murder seemed almost always to spring from an apparently trivial cause. Sometimes, before the murder, the son "fought with himself, trying to keep down the impulse to kill." And when that fight had been lost the murder almost always took place in the mother's bedroom. The weapons ranged from knives and hatchets to guns and hammers—but never poison. . . . Concealment of the deed was lacking or perfunctory, and the murderer usually made a full and voluntary confession.

Dr. Wertham tried first to apply to Gino the known classifications of mental disorder, but none of them would fit; Orestes provided a clue—and more than a clue, the complete mechanism—and after Orestes, Hamlet. The pages on Hamlet in *Dark Legend* are, of course, secondary to the book's theme, but they throw almost as much light on Hamlet's relations to his mother as on Gino's relations to his. Dr. Wertham brings out the latent incest-wish in Hamlet, and gives a new and valuable emphasis to the passages in which Hamlet accuses his mother and rails against women in general. Many of the threats which seem to be directed against Claudius are in fact meant for Gertrude; in the nunnery scene, for example, after the long speech about the wantonness of women, Hamlet exclaims: "All but one shall live", and Dr. Wertham has made the very surprising discovery, hitherto apparently missed by commentators, that in one scene, although his mother is not present, he addresses the king as "dear mother." The fact that Hamlet did not kill his mother was due not to scruples about killing (he ended with five murders to his count), but to the obstacles of love-hatred. He had also the

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advantage of words as weapons: "I will speak daggers to her, but use none." Poor Gino had no words, only a bread-knife.

This has been a brief and rather inadequate review of a remarkable book. Readers, I am afraid, may find some difficulty in obtaining a copy of *Dark Legend*, which is not published in this country but only distributed in the American edition by an agent. I hope that it will attract the eye of some English publisher, with a little paper to spare, who will give it a wider circulation.

G. W. STONIER

HIPPY AND HITLER

Hippy. In Memoriam. THE STORY OF A DOG. By SIR NEVILE HENDERSON. *Hodder.* 3s. 6d.

This painful little book is an historical document of considerable interest. The author was our ambassador in Berlin in the years immediately preceding the present war. He therefore occupied the most important diplomatic post in Europe at the most crucial moment, perhaps, in all European history. He was the key man at the key post in the key town, for it is no exaggeration to say that during those years the future of Europe—war or peace—depended mainly upon the relations between the government of Mr. Chamberlain and the government of Herr Hitler. Mr. Chamberlain was well aware of this; he took the control of foreign policy out of the hands of his Foreign Secretary into his own in order to deal with Hitler and the Nazi government himself and to win peace by "appeasement." He and the Foreign Office must be assumed, therefore, to have deliberately retained the late Sir Nevile Henderson, the most suitable person in the British Diplomatic Service (and outside it) to deal personally with Hitler and his gang, to represent the policy of the British Government and the Prime Minister in Berlin. They knew Hitler to be a dangerous and determined tough surrounded by dangerous and determined toughs, armed not with revolvers in a Chicago slum, but with the largest and most highly equipped army and air force in the centre of Europe. It must be assumed, I repeat, that they chose the owner of Hippy as the best man in the British Empire to talk to Adolf Hitler.

The book is an important historical document because it reveals completely the psychology of Hippy's owner. Hippy was an extremely unpleasant dog whom his owner adored. The reason why Sir Nevile adored this courageous, but ill-natured, cur appears to have been that Hippy had only one passion in life, the hunting down of game, and that Sir Nevile had the same passion, the only difference being that where Hippy relied upon feet and teeth, Sir Nevile relied upon a gun or a rod. The attitude of the man to the dog is shown by the fact that Sir Nevile says at the beginning of the book that Hippy compensated him for the loss of his mother and his ancestral home, and at the end of the book that he cannot conceive of an afterlife "unless Hippy be waiting there to share it with me." The author rarely mentions anything beyond the exploits of Hippy and hunting, shooting, and fishing; the only other objects of his interest appear to be kings, princes, and princesses, and the dogs of kings, princes, and princesses. A more ingenuous book or more ingenuous ambassador could not be imagined, and the whole is brilliantly illuminated by five ingenuous photographs of Hippy with Sir Nevile (variously tailored), accompanied occasionally by dead animals and a king.

This simple-minded sportsman had been bred to be at home in the nineteenth century life of English country-gentlemen or in the twentieth century annexes of Cheltenham and St. Leonards-on-Sea, to which they often had to retire after losing "ancestral homes." The Foreign Office and the Government selected him as the one man to deal with Hitler. They would have done far better to choose Hippy who would at least have been able to talk to Hitler in his own language. For Hippy, like Hitler, was a kind of mongrel Austrian, a cross between an Austrian dachshund and a Bavarian bloodhound. Like Hitler, his "rôle was to follow the blood trail till he either lost it or ran the wounded beast to a standstill. In the latter case he would bay it with the deep bass notes of the ordinary bloodhound, a most astonishing noise to hear coming from so small a dog. During the pursuit, on the other hand, his note was a rather piercing yap. If he lost the trail he followed his own tracks backwards and always returned to the exact spot from which he had started." Yes, Hippy spoke Hitler's language.

LEONARD WOOLF

GENTLE PRINCE

Brought Up in England. By PRINCE CHULA OF THAILAND. *Foulis.* 21s.

This long and unsensational autobiography has no obvious appeal except to those specially interested in Thailand or motor-racing. But if you once dip into it, you go on reading with more and more pleasure. Prince Chula is the grandson of King Chulalongrom, and would have been heir to the throne if his mother had been Siamese instead of Russian. At the age of twelve he was brought to be educated in England, at Harrow and Trinity, Cambridge; and here, except for three short visits to his native land, he has remained. He is married to an English lady, and now that his country has unhappily declared war upon us, he serves here as a private in the Home Guard. He has written a number of books in Siamese on European history, and has adapted Gogol's *Government Inspector* for the Siamese stage. He is a lover of Mozart and the Ballet, but his chief interest has been motor-racing. He does not drive himself, but he organised the *équipe* of his cousin, Prince Birabongse, than whom few drivers have been more successful and none more polished. His devotion to "Bira" has evidently been the dominating sentiment of his life. Though Prince Chula is deeply attached to this country, he has little explicit to say about our national character or about the advantages and disadvantages of a European education for Asiatics. If his book wins the reader's heart, it is because the author unconsciously reveals what the French call *une âme bien née*. His courtesy, his humour, his modesty, his candour all come from the heart with a spontaneity that is unmistakable. An Eurasian who combines the efficiency of the West with the refinement of the East, he is an exquisite argument in favour of mixed marriages. Much as he may have learnt from Europe, he remains untouched by our vulgarity. It is curious that a book, from which one could hardly quote a sentence memorable for wit or originality, should impress one so deeply with the charm of a person.

R. M.

Week-end Competitions

No. 691

Set by E. K.

The views of writers about one another are always interesting, though often foolish. Competitors are invited to invent extracts of not more than 200 words from the critical opinions of Gibbon on Carlyle, Carlyle on Wilde, Wilde on Bernard Shaw, or Bernard Shaw on Jane Austen.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 8th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 688

Set by Saint-Loup

The Head of a school wishes, with good reason but inadequate evidence, to get rid of a pupil, and writes therefore to the father, a Bishop whose good will is important. No obvious excuse is valid. The usual prizes are offered for the most skilful letter of not more than 200 words.

Report by Saint-Loup

A very large entry, including contributions from a headmaster and a child aged nine. Surprisingly few letters staged girls' schools, though the competition was carefully worded to make this possible. A large proportion of letters contained the real and obviously valid reasons for the Head's desire to get the pupil removed. On the other hand, letters are more likely to effect their object without further trouble if they include some carefully veiled hint of what the trouble has been. The difficulty is to steer between candour and too conspicuous an evasiveness. In judging I have, however, avoided rigour on these two points in favour of entries that are intrinsically amusing. I commend L. G. Jacob for the sentence, "The truth of your saying that New Testament precepts are not always possible in modern times has been proved"; and Towanbucket opening a most evasive letter with the words "You know me for a blunt, straightforward man." M. M. Confoy sent a specially good entry, as did Ralph Nye, Mike, Peter Quince, Ananias, Paul Peterhead, Leslie Johnson, E. M. F., G. H. Leggott, M. J., Mary G. Thomas, Lynette Stevens, and N. B. I recommend that prizes of a guinea and a half each go to L. E. J. and Arthur Marshall, prizes of half a guinea each to E. W. F. and Sheila Knowles. William Bliss and George Simms are regretfully disqualified for exceeding the word-limit.

My Dear Bishop,

Your letter in the *Times* was the very thing wanted. Thank you. We schoolmasters—perhaps only we schoolmasters—know the need you speak of. "Christian homes"—yes, indeed, but where are they? What do you say to Marie Stopes, complete edition, openly displayed on a boy's shelves? (Charing Cross Road in the Schoolhouse!) Instant expulsion? By no means; his mother gave 'em to him! And the New Statesman in the house library—well-thumbed; why, they tell me the man's an avowed agnostic. Ban it? Not so easy when my house captain's father presents it. Writes most of it, too, from what I hear. And these are my *best* boys, mind you; your Willies' set. (Nothing to do about that—you know what school is—inescapable juxtapositions.) Willie's sensitive, too—and impressionable—it makes one a bit on the *qui vive* for him. One can't help hearing and seeing things. But we must hope—and trust—that in Willie's case "home influence"—as you so rightly say—will be sufficient antidote to his daily dose of Sex and unbelief.

Willie's health this term only so-so; but you know this climate. Lowering. Again congratulations on the letter.

Yours in haste,
A. Fox.
(L. E. J.)
Blackthorn Grange,
Norfolk

My Dear Bishop,

You will by now have received Digby's report (despatched rather later than usual owing to Miss Thorneycroft's sudden departure) and will have noted that his fellows have again somewhat outstripped him. His endearing disinclination to outshine others has not, happily, enabled him to conceal his artistic abilities, his *Eve Triumphant* figurine (moulded spasmodically out of school) and *gouache* of Matron (*Femme Assise*) revealing gifts beyond his years.

Imagine then my consternation at Doctor Boddington's bombshell: the East Coast is over-bracing Digby, and he must be immediately relaxed. He is hyper-sensitive (your own estimation of him, you will recollect) and physical stimulation may exact a compensating toll. Boddington's verdict, concurring doubtless with that of your good self, is a change of scene, and forthwith. How timely, therefore, is the vacancy at Spume Tor, Dungeness (co-educational, and run by my sister-in-law), where Digby would find fresh fields to conquer and the less invigorating climate which Boddington urgently counsels. Nurse Dugdale specialises in strabismi, so Digby should be in clover.

Mrs. Strudwick is deeply disappointed at losing her "little pickle" when he was developing so rapidly.

Yours very sincerely,
Vernon Strudwick.
(Arthur Marshall)

My Dear Bishop,

David's character is developing very rapidly, and I am asking myself how it can be brought to the most useful and fragrant fruition. Although a complete change of his surroundings and orientation would mean a severe loss to this school—upon which he has already left his mark—would it not be an inestimable gain to the lad himself? Reluctantly, I am persuaded that it would.

That he should, for a time at least, be exclusively under home influence (which, in his case, means an influence of priceless worth) is, I am confident, essential for his future.

You know me too well, I hope, to question whether I am concealing any evidence of wrong-doing incriminating David. The contrary is the case; I know of no such evidence, or I would place it in your hands. No; the severance of the tie between David and the school is called for purely on the grounds I have indicated; and you, my dear Bishop, as an old headmaster, will realise how hard a thing it is for me to write this letter, and to effect this severance; but—*per ardua ad astra*.

Yours most sincerely,
Ernest Thewgirdle
(E. W. F.)

My Lord,

I write as I have written in the past—on a subject commanding mutual interest—but you will search in vain for a precedent for this letter.

Knowing that any pretence must be distasteful to you, who wish only for the truth, though it be disarming—I write as I do.

Frankly, then—I write of your son, Godfrey, to request his removal from this school. Were I tempted to fall back on some time-worn excuse open to all headmasters, I would dismiss it contemptuously, holding firm brief by that maxim, "Like father . . ." Such shifts are for the ordinary sons of ordinary parents, whose sensibilities are likely to be receptive of them.

Had this measure not been inevitable, I should have been reluctant to avoid it. Striving always to prefer the best interests of my boys, to have been influenced by personal considerations would have been to sacrifice those of your son.

But let that past which I must dismiss guard you against any misinterpretation of this note. Perhaps again I may have occasion to meet you—not only as a preacher, as any man may do, but as an epicure and as a fisherman.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
——— ———
(Sheila Knowles)

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